

An Introduction to the Laud Troy Book

By

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For Blaine and Zack

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Scholars of the Italian Renaissance generally agree that the rebirth was not a sudden phenomenon, but the continuation of pre-existing interests. Most scholars of English literature, too, believe there is a continuity between the medieval and Renaissance periods, but few studies have been done to point out precise areas of continuity.

This study attempts to show that the Laud Troy Book, a fifteenth century MS in the Bodleian Library, contains ideas and techniques related to the Renaissance revenge tragedies. The structure of the poem is investigated, and comparisons to other versions of the fall of Troy, particularly to the Gest Hystoriale of the Destruction of Troy, are made to delineate the predominant characteristics of the poem. These characteristics are then related to revenge tragedies.

Comparisons to the other versions indicate that the

poet altered the story to emphasize revenge. This theme is accompanied by motifs of madness, treachery, intrigue, love, insult, and blood responsibility--motifs also present in the revenge tragedies. The characterizations of the strong men move from Hector, the most virtuous knight ever, to Achilles, a sighing lover who sees the war as senseless folly, to Pirrus, Achilles' son who not only kills innocent women and old men, but also desecrates their bodies. This characterization of Pirrus as the extreme model of revenge is also found in Hamlet, but no direct influence is evident. Because the characters become more and more vengeful, the poem ends in total social destruction; only the traitors, the weak, and the unheroic Greeks are left. Most revenge tragedies also end with the death of the protagonists and many of the antagonists.

Although the work is not a play, the poet dramatizes his narrative by using motivation, conversation, soliloquy, and realistic description to make the tale vivid. The sensational passages describing brutality and death are also related to the sensational horrors in plays like Titus Andronicus. An examination of the passages spoken by the narrator shows that the poet conceived of his work as a tragedy caused by the actions of specific individuals. The recognition of the individual as causal agent lies at the heart of the great Renaissance portraits, and thus moves the poem away from earlier explanations of Fate, Fortune, or Providence as the cause of the fall.

The study indicates that medieval poets were interested in the theme of revenge and that the theme carried with it some techniques and subordinate motifs which are also present in the Renaissance revenge tragedies. The similarities spring not from a direct influence, but from a nucleus of ideas which surrounded the theme in both periods. Thus, the study establishes one area of continuity. The continental sources of the revenge tragedy should be seen, to some extent, as amplifying and psychologizing an interest already present in native works.



## I. INTRODUCTION

The fifteenth century Italian Renaissance is often spoken of as a rebirth, a flowering, or an awakening as if it were an unprecedented phenomenon in that nation's literature. Yet some historians argue that this Renaissance owed much to a twelfth century Latin Renaissance.<sup>1</sup> Friederich Heer writes:

The poets and natural philosophers of the Italian Renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had their predecessors in the humanists, Platonists, natural philosophers, poets and theoretical exponents of the ars amandi... of the twelfth century.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, Frederick Artz says:

What the 'Renaissance of the Twelfth Century' had been on the verge of accomplishing was achieved by Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Italian humanists came to be the heirs and successors of the mediaeval rhetoricians.<sup>3</sup>

Herbert Muller also writes: "The more exuberant humanism of the Renaissance was a continuation of the medieval trend, not a sudden rebellion."<sup>4</sup> There is debate and qualification concerning the theory of a twelfth century Renaissance,<sup>5</sup> but few historians deny its existence and influence. In view of the relationship between the two

periods, the later Renaissance becomes not so much a sudden flowering as the culmination of a movement that began two or three centuries earlier.

Despite these revisions in the theory of the Italian Renaissance, students of medieval and Renaissance English literature are only beginning to explore the continuity between the two periods. The inaccessibility of manuscripts, a situation now being alleviated by technology, and the large body of literature which was apparently destroyed encourage scholars to look to Italy and the continent for the precursors of the English Renaissance rather than to native sources. Yet the studies that have been done on native sources indicate that a continuity between the two periods does exist. For example, Walter Schirmer successfully demonstrates a relationship between Lydgate's Fall of Princes, the Mirror for Magistrates, and Shakespeare's history plays.<sup>6</sup> Ranging over the whole of the middle ages, Willard Farnham focuses on numerous ideas that were ultimately fused in the production of Renaissance tragedies.<sup>7</sup> Mary Mroz indicates some medieval origins, both theological and literary, for the ideas of divine vengeance contained in Renaissance revenge tragedies.<sup>8</sup> Marguerite Hearsey links specific passages in The Complaint of Henry, Duke of Buckingham with similar passages in Lydgate and Gower.<sup>9</sup> Raymond Chapman traces the idea of Fortune in Shakespeare's plays to the medieval traditions of Fortune.<sup>10</sup> Even D.S. Brewer admits that, despite his failure to distinguish

adequately between the terms "middle ages" and "Renaissance," Alain Renoir's emphasis on Lydgate as a transitional figure is a "welcome" piece of scholarship.<sup>11</sup> Brewer's statement indicates the growing awareness of the need for studies in the continuity between the two periods.

This dissertation investigates one small area of continuity. It focuses on the Laud Troy Book (MS.595 in the Bodleian Library), a fifteenth century version of the fall of Troy, in an attempt to show that the ideas and some of the techniques existing in the poem are related to the Renaissance revenge tragedy. The analysis utilizes point of view, organization, contrast, and repetition-- devices often associated with structuralism. Contemporary structuralistic theory, playing on Eliot's idea of literature as an entire existing order which alters with each new work, welcomes studies which relate a specific work to the larger body of literature:

To be transitively understood, to be understood in such a way that it can play its role in society, the work must be placed among other works, and finally among that ideal order of existing monuments which Eliot mentioned.<sup>12</sup>

However, it is not possible to relate the poem to the larger body of literature without first understanding clearly what the nature of the work is and something about what it meant to the medieval audience.<sup>13</sup>

The story of Brutus, a descendant of Aeneas who founded Britain, was first introduced into English liter-

ature by Geoffrey of Monmouth in his pseudo-history of England. Sebastian Evans, editor of Monmouth's history, believes that the final form of the work was instigated by the Norman ruling class, who wished to give the English and the Normans a common heritage.<sup>14</sup> If the Normans in fact wanted the tale disseminated as history, then no literary contrivance could have been more successful. Various chronicles from Geoffrey of Monmouth to Milton indicate the popularity of the legend.<sup>15</sup> Its widespread acceptance marks a change in the English perspective which was essential for any renaissance to occur: the British began looking to Rome, Greece, and Troy for their ancestry, not to Germany, Denmark, and Scandinavia.<sup>16</sup> The advantage of this new perspective is evident; it brought both national and international prestige. At a time when most of the other countries of Europe had already claimed descent from the Trojans, England could ill afford not to associate itself with the splendor of the Mediterranean past. The wonders of the East--the subtle compounds for preserving a body after death, the golden trees which bore gold and silver fruit, the marvelous architectural craftsmanship, and sumptuous surroundings--were all a part of the Englishman's background. He was no barbarian. And the church, of course, raised no objection to Geoffrey of Monmouth's fabrication since it was consistent with the Providential history of the world. Brutus could be traced to Aeneas;

and Aeneas, to Noah. Consequently, the story of Trojan descent became the fashionable explanation for the mysteries of the British past and its link, both secular and divine, to the larger world. But more importantly, the essential direction of the English Renaissance was shaped. An attitude to the culture that produced the classics and the models for the Renaissance was decided.

If the medieval man saw the splendor of the past, he also saw the moral lesson contained in its destruction. The earthly world is mutable; the sinful and the virtuous alike are subject to misfortune. It matters little whether the Trojans fell by Fortune, the machinations of Providence, the influence of the stars, treason, false priests, the nature of women, the worship of pagan gods, or the general human desire for revenge. The people fell, and their destruction effectively underscores the instability of the world. This conception of the world as unstable lies at the heart of the contemptus mundi idea:<sup>17</sup> if this world is mutable, then scorn it and trust in a world that is unchanging. According to Willard Farnham, the conception of the world as unstable, mutable, fickle, and unpredictable is essential to Renaissance tragedy since that form deals with a character's changing fortune. Similarly, the conflict in the revenge play grows out of a character's desire to stabilize virtues in a mutable world. Hamlet and Hieronimo try to establish justice; Romeo and Juliet, a lasting love.

As Farnham adequately shows, the medieval contemptus mundi theme is closely related to the Renaissance tragedy.

In terms of history and morality, then, the Troy legend was a part of the medieval man's understanding of the world about him. Consequently, it is not surprising to find a number of versions of the story still extant. Most of them are based, not on Homer, but on the Latin reconstructions of Dictys Cretensis' Ephemeria de Historia Belli Trojani of about the fourth century and Dares Phrygius' De Excidio Trojae Historia of about the sixth century.<sup>18</sup> N. E. Griffin indicates that Homer's use of the gods, his removal in time from the actual events of the war as compared to Dictys and Dares' claim to eyewitness authority, and the medieval preference for Latin over Greek are major reasons for the medieval choice of the Latin writers over Homer.<sup>19</sup> Although these two versions were often found together in medieval manuscripts, they were sometimes not the direct source for later works.

During the second half of the twelfth century, Benoît de Ste.-Maure, a Norman-French poet, composed Le Roman de Troie, a vernacular versification of the Troy story in over 30,000 verses.<sup>20</sup> Although some authorities posit an expanded Dares from which Benoît drew much of his information, that work is not extant; thus Benoît's poem must be assessed as a highly creative elaboration of the story. In 1287 Guido de Columnis apparently condensed Benoît's verse into a Latin prose version which omitted much of his model's

dramatization and ornamentation, generally leaving plot episodes without descriptions, but sometimes inserting his own interpretations and didactic passages.<sup>21</sup> Guido and Benoît are most often the sources for medieval English versions of the Trojan war.

The Excidium Troiae, a Latin account preserved in a manuscript from the ninth century, apparently influenced one English version, The Seege or Batayle of Troy.<sup>22</sup> As a source, however, the Excidium Troiae is relatively insignificant; its importance lies instead in its form--a school exercise--and its content--Homeric or classical material rather than that of Dictys and Dares. Carol C. Esler in her work on Joseph of Exeter discusses other school exercises based on classical materials.<sup>23</sup> In comparison to the Excidium, however, these poems are short and obviously the work of students, not the text students were to emulate.

The first lengthy work produced in England and devoted in its entirety to the fall of Troy is the six-book, Latin epic by Joseph of Exeter entitled De Bello Trojano. It was composed around 1184 and uses Dares as its primary source. Although popular in its own time and again in the Renaissance, this Latin work did not serve as a source for later English versions probably because its form and epic conventions interested later writers less than the conventions of the romance.<sup>24</sup>

Several fourteenth and fifteenth century English



versions of the Troy material are extant. The Seege or Batayle of Troy, dating from the beginning of the fourteenth century, is evidently of minstrel composition, relying primarily on Dares and occasionally on Benoît and the Excidium Troiae.<sup>25</sup> It is a highly compact work, emphasizing plot action rather than description, didacticism, or theme. The Gest Hystoriale of the Destruction of Troy, done in long-line alliterative verse, dates from the end of the fourteenth century and is a fairly close translation of Guido.<sup>26</sup> Chaucer's treatment of the Troilus episode was also composed at the end of the fourteenth century.<sup>27</sup> The Laud Troy Book, composed around 1400 or slightly before, claims to be a Hector romance and is neither a close translation nor a free rendering of any other extant work.<sup>28</sup> Lydgate's Troy Book, begun around 1412, at the request of Prince Henry, is a creative translation of Guido containing numerous insertions of learned material from the author's own reading.<sup>29</sup> The Prose Siege of Troy, dating from the second quarter of the fifteenth century, is a condensation of Lydgate's Troy Book.<sup>30</sup> In addition to these full-length works, there are two Scottish Troy fragments probably dating from the fifteenth century, although they are sometimes attributed to John Barbour.<sup>31</sup> Based primarily on Guido, these English versions testify to the widespread interest in the story.

Around 1474 Caxton translated and printed a prose romance entitled The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye



based on a French work by Raoul Lefèvre.<sup>32</sup> It represents a turning away from the Dictys-Dares tradition to a restoration of classical accounts. The translation enjoyed a number of editions and served as the basis for Thomas Heywood's Great Britain's Troy, a long poem in ottava rima, and The Four Ages, a series of plays; both works date from the first quarter of the seventeenth century.<sup>33</sup>

Although Shakespeare evidently put together a number of sources for his Troilus and Cressida, the inspiration for his account is primarily classical.<sup>34</sup>

This historical résumé indicates that the legend underwent some significant changes in the later middle ages.<sup>35</sup> The end of the twelfth century fostered interest in new sources of the legend, which in turn gave way to classical sources again in the Renaissance; and the form changed from episodic to full-length accounts. This period between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries thus represents a unique interlude in the English history of the legend and opens the way for explorations of the relationship between the legend and historical and sociological factors which might have influenced the literary mode. Such a study is obviously outside the scope of this dissertation, but an understanding of the history of the legend is important here because the Dictys-Dares tradition is significantly different from the more familiar Homeric tradition. The standard elements of the former should not be mistaken for creative innovations by the Laud poet.

For the reader's convenience, a table of the major differences is presented in Appendix II.

The numerous versions attest to the story's popularity and also indicate that it represents a significant grouping within the total body of medieval literature. Despite its importance, the English Troy material has been the subject of little scholarship. One reason for this inattention may be that the works are of a lesser artistic caliber than most of Chaucer's work, The Pearl, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Piers Plowman, and the other cycles, especially the Arthurian stories. The Laud Troy Book, in particular, seems to lack artistic merit. It has neither the stately alliterative movement of the Gest Hystoriale of the Destruction of Troy nor the rhythmic, minstrel brevity of the Seege or Batayle of Troy to commend it. In fact, R. K. Root in a review of J. Ernst Wülfing's edition of the Laud for the Early English Text Society writes:

Though quite untouched by any breath of true poesy, and extended to the weary length of 18,664 verses of halting octosyllabic couplets, the Laud Troy Book is, nevertheless, so important a document for the English development of the great Troy cycle that students of Middle English will gladly welcome this edition of the poem....<sup>36</sup>

Here, then, is the medieval scholar's dilemma: should a poem lacking in artistry be the subject of analysis? In the case of the Laud, the answer is clearly affirmative because the work is a precursor of the Renaissance revenge

tragedy and as such brings into question the whole theory of the Renaissance as a kind of package suddenly imported from Italy and then modified. Troilus and Criseyde can be called the first psychological novel if psychological means minutely portraying the frustrations of one man. But Chaucer is extraordinary, a genius compared to the other artists of his time; consequently, he is expected to be a forerunner of later, more subtle developments. But the Laud poet's powers are less extraordinary; and consequently, his subject-matter and techniques are probably a better indication of the popular literature of the time than are Chaucer's. For these reasons, then, the work of intermediate quality needs to be explored.<sup>37</sup>

Some preliminary investigations have been done, two of them article-length studies. The first, by Dorothy Kempe, takes the form of a brief introduction.<sup>38</sup> She presents a description of the manuscript, then hypothesizes that the poem, because it fails to make elaborate use of the Troilus-Criseyde material, was written before Chaucer's romance. She also attempts to establish Guido, rather than Benoît, as the immediate source. She considers the illustrations of contemporary life the most interesting element of the poem. Among these illustrations are the naive mixture of paganism and Christianity not found in Guido, Benoît, or Lydgate, and the descriptions of the civic state, dress, armour, weapons, and architecture.

She concludes with an evaluation of the style, which she finds almost devoid of literary skill. Any innovations in the story are accomplished "without definite artistic... purpose" and the versification is "rough, often deficient in grammar."<sup>39</sup> According to Kempe, the poet's strong points seem to be innovations in dialogue, narrative expansions of the Pirrus story, and descriptions of storms, battles, and military life. She notes as "curious" the frequent use of similes and indicates that "the author keeps completely out of sight."<sup>40</sup> Her article shows a number of insights into the poem, but is most important in that it stimulated Wülfing to complete his edition of the manuscript for the Early English Text Society.

Wülfing has also written an article which, in the absence of a formal introduction to his edition, must serve as a guide to his thoughts on the poem.<sup>41</sup> This article makes two major points. The first section supplements, confirms, or corrects Dorothy Kempe's article; the second deals with the problems of sources, and place and date of composition. He presents several arguments indicating that Guido's work was probably not the only material used by the Laud poet for his composition. He indicates that the Laud, the Gest and the Scottish Troy fragments are based to some extent on another common source, probably French. He believes that Benoît and Statius could have been additional sources for the Laud. The date and place of composition he assigns to the northwest Midlands between

the last quarter of the fourteenth century and the first ten years of the fifteenth century. Although he favors Dorothy Kempe's conclusion that the poem was written before Chaucer's romance, he finds it impossible to prove. The article contains no interpretation of the poem, and Wülfing himself considers it a preliminary, not a definitive study.

Two dissertations include passing discussions of the Laud while investigating other, more comprehensive topics dealing with the cycle as a whole. D. N. Hinton treats the Laud in terms of a popular romance.<sup>42</sup> He finds that the words "curtays," "noblay," and "chivalrous" occur only infrequently in the Gest, but are used regularly in the Laud. He notices that marvelous qualities are stressed throughout the Laud; for example, the description of the fleece is lengthy and Medea's powers as sorceress are not disclaimed. Banquets, music, dancing, dress, and formal behavior, in short, attributes of courtly life, are stressed. Warfare, including descriptions of armour and battles, is emphasized, and Hector behaves according to the chivalric ideals of fourteenth century knighthood. Because he considers the work to be a Hector romance, Hinton finds the structure deficient: the hero enters late and dies early. Strangely enough, he believes that most of the material following Hector's death is a straight translation of Guido; but such a view fails to consider the poet's treatment of the Achilles' episode

and the addition of the story of Pirrus which Dorothy Kempe had previously noted as an apparently original elaboration.

Gordon R. Wood sees the Laud as a translation of Guido, but in the "new manner."<sup>43</sup> This new manner is signaled by the use of certain phrases to acknowledge the poet's debt to his source--"of this matter I will not tell," "these are the words of him whom I translate," "as the tretý says"--or by the use of direct references to the author being translated. Since Wood has chosen to interpret the Laud as a translation of Guido, he must account for its marked divergence from the other two translations, the Gest and the Troy Book. His explanation of the "new manner" is one attempted account, and another is based on the purpose for translating:

If one can judge from the poet's silence, he did not make the translation because some patron ordered him to. From internal evidence such as the poet's colloquial style of writing (432-44, 484-500, 765-92), one may conclude that he intended the poem for a more general audience. If this is so, we have, perhaps, an explanation of the difference in content between the Laud translation and those contemporary with it: a translation designed to please a general audience need not follow the source closely. Its author, in order to keep the attention of the audience, may reject everything which stops the progress of the story, and he may greatly elaborate those things which he thinks will add to it.<sup>44</sup>

Such explanations of the differences between the Laud and other versions of the Troy story are not exhaustive and are certainly biased by the initial assumption that the Laud is



a translation of Guido. Wood does, however, recognize a number of important differences between the Laud and the two other versions: the Laud poet "discards all elements not relating to the Trojan war"; he adds "Hector's own words," "detailed accounts of armour and fighting," and "an analysis of the emotions of the contestants"; and he leaves out the Greeks' return.<sup>45</sup>

These last two approaches to the Laud are less than satisfactory because, of course, they do not focus primarily on the Laud and thus are only partial and sometimes inaccurate explanations. The first two approaches represent exploratory studies which, for the most part, are concerned with the circumstances of the manuscript and its composition rather than with the contents. This study differs from the previous studies in that it focuses solely on the Laud and attempts to delineate its distinguishing characteristics, relating it ultimately to the Renaissance revenge tragedies.

The division of the following work is based on various aspects of the poem. One chapter focuses on the narrator, another on theme, another on characterization, and still another on descriptive techniques. An outline of the contents of the Laud is presented in Appendix I, and an annotated bibliography of relevant works is included in Appendix III.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Charles Homer Haskins, The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century (Cambridge, Mass., 1927).

<sup>2</sup>Friedrich Heer, The Medieval World: Europe 1100-1350 (New York, 1962), p. 19.

<sup>3</sup>Frederick B. Artz, The Mind of the Middle Ages, 3rd ed. rev. (New York, 1958), pp. 434-435.

<sup>4</sup>Herbert Muller, The Uses of the Past (New York, 1952), p. 252.

<sup>5</sup>C. Warren Hollister, The Twelfth Century Renaissance (New York, 1969), note particularly the bibliographic essay, pp. 165-167.

<sup>6</sup>Walter F. Schirmer, "The Importance of the Fifteenth Century for the Study of the English Renaissance with Special Reference to Lydgate," English Studies Today, ed. by C.L. Wrenn and G. Bullough (London, 1951), pp. 104-110.

<sup>7</sup>Willard Farnham, The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1936).

<sup>8</sup>Mary Bonaventure Mroz, Divine Vengeance: Philosophical Backgrounds of the Revenge Motif in Shakespeare's Chronicle History Plays (Washington, D.C., 1941).

<sup>9</sup>Marguerite Hearsey (ed.), The Complaint of Henry, Duke of Buckingham (New Haven, 1936).

<sup>10</sup>Raymond Chapman, "The Wheel of Fortune in Shakespeare's History Plays," Review of English Studies, new series I (1950), 1-7.

<sup>11</sup>D.S. Brewer, rev. of The Poetry of John Lydgate, by Alain Renoir, Speculum, XLIV (1969), 317-318.

<sup>12</sup>Geoffrey Hartman, "Structuralism: The Anglo-American adventure," Structuralism, ed. by Jacques Ehrmann (Garden City, New York, 1970), p. 148.

<sup>13</sup>Dorothy Everett writes: "However the scholar may



sympathize with the natural reactions of his contemporaries to any work of art, it is part of his business to make clear its significance for the time in which it was created..." "A Characterization of the English Medieval Romances," E&S, XV (1929), 98-99.

<sup>14</sup>Sebastian Evans (trans. and ed.), Histories of the Kings of Britain, by Geoffrey of Monmouth (New York, 1911), p. xv.

<sup>15</sup>Laura Keeler, Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Late Latin Chroniclers 1300-1500 (Los Angeles and Berkeley, 1946), pp. 1-2.

<sup>16</sup>George Gordon, "The Trojans in Britain," E&S, IX (1924), 28, and J.J. Jusserand, The English Novel in the Time of Shakespeare, trans. by Elizabeth Lee (London, 1890), p. 39.

<sup>17</sup>Farnham, p. 79.

<sup>18</sup>A.J. Valpy (ed.), Dictys Cretensis et Dares Phrygius De bello Troiano, II (London, 1825). All citations are from this edition.

<sup>19</sup>N.E. Griffin, Dictys and Dares: An Introduction to the Study of the Medieval Story of Troy (Baltimore, 1907) and "The Un-Homeric Elements in the Medieval Story of Troy," JEGP, VII (1908), 32-52.

<sup>20</sup>Leopold Constans (ed.), Le Roman de Troie, par Benoît de Sainte-Maure, Société des Anciens Textes Français, 6 vols., (Paris, 1904-1912). All citations are from this edition.

<sup>21</sup>N.E. Griffin (ed.), Guido de Columnis, Historia destructionis Troiae, (Cambridge, Mass., 1936). All citations are from this edition.

<sup>22</sup>E. Bagby Atwood and Virgil K. Whitaker (eds.), Excidium Troiae (Cambridge, Mass., 1944).

<sup>23</sup>Carol C. Esler, "Joseph of Exeter's Bellum Troianum: A Literary Study and English Translation," Diss. Bryn Mawr College, 1966.

<sup>24</sup>Geoffrey B. Riddehough, "A Forgotten Poet: Joseph of Exeter," JEGP, XLVI (1947), 254.

<sup>25</sup>Mary E. Barnicle (ed.), The Seege or Batayle of Troye, Early English Text Society, 172 (London, 1927).

<sup>26</sup>George A. Panton and David Donaldson (eds.), The

Gest Hystoriale of the Destruction of Troy, Early English Text Society, 39, 56 (London, 1869-1874). All citations are from this edition.

<sup>27</sup>Geoffrey Chaucer, The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. by Fred N. Robinson, 2nd ed. (Boston, 1957). All citations are from this edition.

<sup>28</sup>J. Ernst Wülfing (ed.), The Laud Troy Book, Early English Text Society, 121, 122 (London, 1902-1903). All citations are from this edition.

<sup>29</sup>John Lydgate, Lydgate's Troy Book, ed. by Henry Bergen, Early English Text Society, extra series 97, 103, 106, 126 (London, 1906-1935). All citations are from this edition.

<sup>30</sup>N.E. Griffin, "The Sege of Troy," PMLA, XXII (1907), 157-200.

<sup>31</sup>Carl Horstmann, Barbour's, des schottischen Nationaldichters, Legendensammlung nebst den Fragmenten seines Trojanerkreiges, II (Heilbronn, 1881), 255ff.

<sup>32</sup>Raoul Lefèvre, The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye, trans. by William Caxton, ed. by H.O. Sommer, 2 vols. (London, 1894).

<sup>33</sup>Thomas Heywood, "The Iron Age, Parts I and II," The Dramatic Works of Thomas Heywood, III (London, 1874); Troia Britannica: Or, Great Britaines Troy (London, 1609).

<sup>34</sup>G.B. Harrison (ed.), Shakespeare: The Complete Works (New York, 1948), p. 974. All citations are from this edition.

<sup>35</sup>E. Bagby Atwood and Virgil Whitaker discuss various foreign versions of the tale in their introduction to Excidium Troiae.

<sup>36</sup>R.K. Root, rev. of The Laud Troy Book, ed. by J. Ernst Wülfing, JEGP, V (1903-1905), 367-368.

<sup>37</sup>George Kane assesses the Laud as "first among the works of intermediate quality." Middle English Literature (London, 1951), p. 26.

<sup>38</sup>Dorothy Kempe, "A Middle English Tale of Troy," Englische Studien, XXIX (1901), 1-26.

<sup>39</sup>Kempe, pp. 22-23.

<sup>40</sup>Kempe, p. 25.

<sup>41</sup>J. Ernst Wülfing, "Das Laud Troy-Book," Englische Studien, XXIX (1901), 374-398.

<sup>42</sup>D.N. Hinton, "A Study of the Middle English Poems Relating to the Destruction of Troy," Diss. Univ. of Wisconsin, 1957.

<sup>43</sup>Gordon R. Wood, "The Middle English Alliterative Destruction of Troy: A Critical Study," Diss. Princeton, 1952, p. 29.

<sup>44</sup>Wood, pp. 22-23.

<sup>45</sup>Wood, p. 27.

## II. NARRATOR AND GENRE

The following chapter attempts to show that the Laud Troy Book is narrated by a speaker who believes the Trojans fell because they made a number of wrong decisions and who also links his tale to other medieval tragedies of Fortune, but does not offer Providential explanations of the fall. This emphasis on the individual rather than on Fortune or Providence helps to make the Laud a transitional piece, standing somewhere between medieval and Renaissance tragedy.

First of all, the poem is narrated by a speaker who is sympathetic to the Trojans and laments their fall. The passages spoken by this narrator can be easily identified because they all begin with similar phrases: "So weylaway that it was so" (2705), "A, Priamus, if that thow wistes" (3600), "Alas, Paris, what hastow do"(3352), "Alas, Ector! he rewys my thoght" (3356), "Alas, me rewes of Priamus" (3367), "A noble Troye, that was rial" (3373). Each passage laments the action of some individual and foretells disaster; and each one also emphasizes the element of tragedy by underscoring the difference between what might have been and what will actually come to pass.

The lamentations occur at strategic points in the story. The first follows the proposal that Paris should go to revenge his father on the Greeks. Cassandra prophesies destruction if he does, but Priam refuses to listen. At this point, the narrator interrupts to indicate that if Paris had not gone to Greece, the destruction could have been avoided:

So weylaway that it was so,  
That he nolde afftir hir [Cassandra] do!  
For hadde he don afftir hir rede,  
Hadde he not so some ben dede,  
Ne the Cite not be brent,  
Ne alle hir kyn so foule be schent.  
In al the world suche a Cite  
Neuere was ne neuere schal be. (2705-2712)

Here Priam, by refusing to believe Cassandra's prophecy, brings about total destruction of his lineage and city. This pattern occurs at least two other times in the Laud: during an early council Helenus warns of destruction (2519-2540), but is mocked by Troilus; and, again, Partheus, during an open council, repeats his father's prophecy (2635-2662), but the general citizenry cry out against him (2663-2672). Thus, Priam hears three prophecies against sending Paris on the mission to the Greeks, and he chooses to disregard all three. His decision itself does not constitute a tragic situation, but the narrator's lamentation, which recalls the final effect of the decision, forces the reader to see that this action will cause ultimate destruction. From the narrator's point of view, then, failing to act on true prophecy is a significant element in the final tragedy.

Late in the council which finally sends Paris to Greece, Hector offers a number of reasons why the Trojans should not engage in a war against the Greeks (2319-2372), but Priam also disregards this advice. The narrator then laments:

A, Priamus, if that thow wistes  
The sorwe that comes to the and thine  
Off noble Troye the gret ruyne!  
Haddest thow don be Ectores rede,  
Then haddest thow not be dede.  
Now comes thi sorwe and thi wo,  
Alas, thi Ioye schal ouer-go! (3600-3606)

In the eyes of the narrator, Priam's failure to take Hector's advice, like his failure to act on Cassandra's prophecy, is directly related to the tragic outcome.

Priam also grants too many truces. The Greeks have heavy losses; the weather sometimes works against them; and they often need time to get supplies. Therefore, they ask for truces under the guise of honoring the dead. Because the Trojans are anxious for peace, they willingly grant the truces, despite Hector's arguments (8160-8198). The Laud poet increases the number of truces by almost twice that found in the other narratives, and the narrator shows that granting at least one of these truces is a significant factor in the fall of Troy:

A, Priamus! that thow was madde,  
When thow the trewes so lyztly graunted!  
For haddes thow thenne that batayle haunted  
Thei schulde haue died with gret vilte,  
With swerd at that gret mortalite! (9844-9848)

Thus, the narrator again emphasizes a wrong decision, one which will ultimately bring about the fall of the city.

Some lamentations enumerate the tragic results of an individual's action. When Paris finally brings Helen to Troy and marries her, the narrator comments on the action:

Alas, Paris, what hastow do,  
 When thow leddest away Eleyne!  
 So many gode knyghtes for hir schul be sclayne,  
 And alle thi kyn to dethe was brought.  
 Alas, Ector! he rewys my thoght,  
 That he schulde dye for his disert!  
 So strong he was In armes apert,  
 Ne neuere wrong he wolde do.  
 Alas, that thi god Appollo  
 Ne hadde throwe the In the salt-flom,  
 Er thow haddist broght hir hom!  
 By Ihesu Crist of Nazareth!  
 I wolde, thow haddist taken the dethe,  
 When thow wentist to Tytharie,  
 To here and se that melodye!  
 Alas, me rewes of Priamus,  
 Off Hectuba, and gode Troylus,  
 Off Pollexene, and Andromede!  
 That Paris made brend In a glede,  
 When thow leddest away Eleyne  
 Out of the temple of dame Vyane!  
 A noble Troye, that was rial,  
 A-doun is throwen with ston and wal;  
 That made Paris and his euel wit.  
 And elles hit scholde haue stonde zit  
 As longe as Ierusalem,  
 Ne hadde Paris ben and his fals drem.  
 Now artow down, and thi toures hye,  
 For Paris ffals a-voutrye! (3352-3380)

The passage is primarily a catalog of events which are all the results of Paris' action. Here again a character's failure to realize the ramifications of his action causes the fall of Troy.

Hector also makes a mistake which affects others. He decides to go to battle even though Andromache has had a prophetic dream that he will be killed. This decision prompts a one-hundred and fifteen line lamentation, by far the longest the narrator ever delivers (9877-9992). It



consists of a catalog of events which will result from Hector's foolish decision (9905-9908): Priam will lose his nobility; Hecuba and Pollexena, their lives; Troilus, the lands he might have ruled; Andromache, her husband and her royal position; the knights, their happiness; and the citizenry, their treasure and greatness. Here again the narrator emphasizes the relationship between Hector's action and the lives of all the people in Troy. According to Willard Farnham, recognizing the individual and the relationship of his specific action to the larger situation is an important element in the growth of Renaissance tragedy.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the narrator's analysis of individual actions in relation to the outcome of the war constitutes one factor which makes the Laud a transitional poem.

The narrator's lamentations all have a similarity of content and construction which link all the erroneous actions of the Trojans, making them the cause of the fall. The narrator thus serves a kind of analytic function in that he points out the errors. Neither the Gest nor Lydgate's Troy Book interpret the fall as the result of a number of individual actions.

The Gest poet indicates that he is a serious translator, rendering into English Guido's history:<sup>2</sup>

But þe truth for to telle & þe text euyn  
 Of þat fight how it felle in a few yeres,  
 þat was clanly compilet with a clerk wise,  
 On Gydo, a gome, þat graidly hade soght,  
 And wist all þe werks by weghe he hade,



That bothe were in batell while the batell last  
 And euper sawte & assemely see with þere een.

...  
 In this shall faithfully be founden to the fer ende,  
 All þe dedes by dene as þai done were. (51-79)

The poet, following his source, blames lust in women for the fall, specifically in Helen, who could not refrain from going to the temple when she heard Paris was there.

According to the poem, her lust ultimately brings about treason, war, and ruin (2920-2982). The poet also condemns corruption and covetousness in priests, specifically in that priest who sold the Palladium to Antenor (11768-11781), and a long passage is devoted to the folly of idolatry, which, of course, has no power to save (4295-4458). The Gest, paralleling Guido's work, uses the tale for purposes of moral edification.

Lydgate indicates that he, too, is translating, but he feels free to fill his work with all kinds of scholarly elaboration. Sometimes a sentence or even a name will be enough to suggest a history or a fable to him. Consequently, before Aeneas betrays Troy, Lydgate, who obviously knows the Aeneid and wishes to excuse the hero of that work for his inappropriate action in this poem, explains that the unfavorable conjunction of the stars brought about the treason (IV, 4440-4532). In this way the poet is able to preserve the image that he has previously created, Aeneas as the glorious founder of the Roman Empire. The implicit suggestion here is that the fall of Troy was Providential. These comparisons indicate that the Laud poet offers a

different explanation of the fall than most other versions do, and this explanation looks forward to the Renaissance, which also emphasizes the individual and his actions as the cause of events.

In the Laud, however, the characters cannot clearly see the end result of their actions. For this reason Priam (1941-1943), Hector (2337-2342), Agamemnon (11418-11422), Aeneas (7150-7160), and Achilles (12291-12292) all indicate that men ought to be cautious in their behavior. This, then, is their tragic flaw; they have not the power to know the future. On the other hand, Dephebus pragmatically states their position:

...lordynges, if it were so,  
Off eche a thyng that men schulde do,  
If thei caste that noght be-falle,  
Nis no man of vs nowher, bonde ne thralle,  
That any-thyng scholde be-gynne, fro drede  
That he scholde fayle or euel spede. (2505-2510)

Thus, what the Trojans must do, when contrasted with what they ought to do, clearly shows their tragic position in the universe. They have limited knowledge, being unable to recognize those prophecies and reasonings which, if followed, would lead to their ultimate well-being, and yet they must act.

In an analysis of the alliterative Morte Arthure, Larry Benson explains medieval tragedy as a kind of tension:

The tension is between two goods, between the Christian detachment that is necessary for ultimate happiness even on this earth and the complete engagement with an earthly ideal that is necessary for heroism.<sup>2</sup>

The Laud, then, has half the material for medieval tragedy;

the characters are forced to engage in the earthly ideals of honor and obligation to a lord. But rather than presenting the ideals of Christian detachment to create a tension, the Laud poet emphasizes the idea of limited knowledge which prevents the characters from both preserving their own well being and doing the earthly things they must. According to Frederick Artz, "The Renaissance, as it is commonly described, is not the Middle Ages plus man, but the Middle Ages minus God...."<sup>4</sup> In comparison to Guido's history, the Gest, and Lydgate's Troy Book, the Laud is unique because it does not contain didactic passages praising or defending Christianity. Neither does it present Boethian philosophy or scholastic debate as do other medieval works. Despite passing references to Christianity and the standard opening and closing, the poem is free of direct Christian interpolation. By focusing on individuals and their actions rather than on Christian or Boethian philosophies, the Laud again foreshadows the Renaissance, which also focuses on men rather than didactic messages.

Roy Battenhouse, in discussing the Shakespearean conception of tragedy, underscores the idea of the tragic flaw:

In several [of the tragic characters], there are faults he [Shakespeare] has not named or faults at a level deeper than he has named, which contribute at least indirectly to the disasters which ensue. An initial self-righteousness in Cordelia, a mad wilfulness in Lear, a superstitiousness in Gloucester, and a weather-vane deviousness in Polonius might be mentioned for instance.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, in Shakespeare's work, the tragedy grows not only out of situation and action, but also out of the character's inherent nature. H.R. Patch finds a similar trend in medieval heroes:

If the suffering of the chief figure in the scenes comes accidentally, then we may indeed consider this a weak and sentimental kind of tragedy. No doubt that is how the term Fortune was understood in the Middle Ages....But mediaeval authors wrote better stories than those of pure chance. We find many allusions to the wanton pride of the hero before his fall, a circumstance that makes the action of Fortune more rational.<sup>6</sup>

This touch of pride can be found in Troilus' scorn of lovers (I, 194-203) and again in the alliterative Morte Arthure in Arthur's desire for conquests beyond Rome (3211).<sup>7</sup>

The Laud also presents a tragic flaw, but it is not a flaw peculiar to one man; it is the nature of the species. No one can know the future. According to Battenhouse, the flaws portrayed in Shakespeare's characters are unique to the particular personality. That is, not everyone suffers from superstition or self-righteousness, but a number of people do. Consequently, the portraits are pleasing because they are true to life. But the flaw as found in the Laud retains the medieval quality of Everyman. In fact, characterization in general lacks detailed development in the Laud. As George Kane says, "The charming intimacy of romances like Beues of Hamptoun or Hauelok, where we attach our sympathies to the fortunes of a single character, is wanting here."<sup>8</sup> Since it lacks an intimate account of

the central character with whom the reader can identify, the poem is not as moving as the Morte Arthure or Troilus and Criseyde; consequently, the tragic effect of the fall is lessened. Since the flaw is inherent in the species and is not a quality a man might presumably control if he tried, the Laud, then, stands somewhere between the earlier medieval tragedy in which the fall is due primarily to uncontrollable cosmic factors and the great Renaissance portraits of individuals who, through their own actions, bring about destruction.

The Laud is a transitional work, too, in terms of its Fortune motif. A few minor references to the goddess are sprinkled throughout the work, but the only major passage is spoken by the narrator following Hector's decision to withdraw his troops in the first formal battle:

But Ector was that day vnblessed,  
Off grace certes that day he myssed,  
He myght that day the batayl haue ent  
And alle the Gregeis clene haue schent,  
That thei schulde neuere haue passed the see  
With lyff ne lym to here contre;  
But destene, that fortune ledes,  
When he beholdis that men best spedis  
With sicur traist of wel spedying,  
He makes hem leue somtyme a thyng  
That he may haue at his wille,  
That he schal neuere come ther-tille.

...  
For I haue herd offte say,  
That he that wil not whan he may,  
When he wolde, he getis it noght,  
Then hit were ful faire be-sought,  
Som tyme, as good hap nere,  
That comes not ones In seuene yere. (5883-5906)

A description of Fortune and a catalog of those she has

undone--Alexander, Caesar, Arthur, and Hector--complete the lengthy passage.

These references to Fortune and Destiny suggest that the poet may be offering a Providential explanation for the fall, rather than an explanation based primarily on individual behavior; but such is not actually the case because Fortune never assumes an active role in the poem. She is termed "fficul" (5909), "frele" (5909), "variable" (5915), and unstable (5916). She "be-trayes" (5912), "be-swykes" (5918), and "aruses" (5959). She is motivated by hate (8563) and desire (9851); and she is often a "foo mortel" (9849), an image of battle which fits nicely with the plot action, but is not developed. She also "turnes and trendeles as doth a bal" (5953), a stance related to the graphic depictions of her standing on a ball.<sup>9</sup> But none of these descriptions are developed to form any recurrent theme. Similarly, the image of the wheel is absent. There are oblique references to it, as when Fortune desires Priam's "blysse doun" (9851), but there are no explicit references. If the poet was familiar, as he undoubtedly was, with the four positions on the wheel as rising, reigning, falling, and being cast off, he may have been reluctant to use this image of the life of a prince for material depicting the fall of a city.

Destiny, whom Fortune leads (5889), is barely described at all. His principle role seems to be to lead men away from things they might easily attain, as he leads Hector



from victory in the first formal battle (5889-5894). Destiny also prompts one of the few truisms in the Laud: often a man will not do what he may, and later cannot do what he would (5091-5096). The idea is essentially Boethian; but like other poets of the period, the author of the Laud does not attempt to make any explanation of the precise connection between destiny and free will.

He does indicate, however, that Destiny can be overcome by men's free will: the narrator assures the reader twice that Hector could have had the victory in the first formal battle had he chosen to take the opportunity (5894-5899, 5955-5959). Again, before Hector's final battle, the narrator indicates that if the hero had not gone this day, he would subsequently have led the Trojans to victory (10006-10008). Priam, too, says before this final battle that it is possible for Hector to beat his destiny if he remains at home (10146-10150); but after he rides off despite Priam's command, the narrator says it is now impossible to avoid the tragedy (10549-10550). This series of comments implies a relationship between destiny and free will, but nowhere does the poet explicitly investigate the problems involved in relating the two as Chaucer does in Troilus' famous speech on predestination and free will (IV, 958-1079). In fact, the poem in comparison to Troilus and Criseyde is quite devoid of philosophical import. Unlike Chaucer's work, the references to Fortune and Destiny in the Laud form no significant and

well-developed nucleus for the poem. They seem rather to provide a traditional framework which links the poem, not to the catalog of romances presented in the introduction (15-24), but to the catalog of tragedies presented by the narrator in the gnomic interpolation of Fortune. Because Fortune and Destiny never become active or causal agents in the poem, then, they are primarily of artistic importance, providing a tradition for understanding the poem, rather than a philosophical or theological explanation for the misfortunes that come even to the virtuous.

In his thorough explication of the medieval ideas on Fortune, H.R. Patch writes:

Of course the greatest injuries one can receive from Fortune nearly all consist in the fall from a state of honor....Since this change in man's fortune is what really constitutes the medieval idea of tragedy, we may call this the "tragic theme." ...The literary type of the tragedy caused by Fortune was firmly established and well recognized in the Middle Ages.<sup>10</sup>

Chaucer's translation of Boethius' De consolacione contains a famous passage showing the link between the medieval concepts of fortune and tragedy: "What other thyng bywaylen the crynges of tragedyes but oonly the dedes of Fortune, that with unwar strook overturneth the realmes of great nobleye?" (ii, pr. 2). Lydgate's Troy Book contains a similar linkage:

But tragidie, who so list to knowe,  
It begynneth in prosperite,  
And endeth euer in aduersite;



And it also doth þe conquest trete  
 Of riche kynges and of lordys grete,  
 Of myzty men and olde conquerours,  
 Whiche by fraude of Fortunys schowris  
 Ben ouercast & whelmed from her glorie.  
 (ii, 852-859)

If the medieval poets did indeed recognize a group of tales related through their emphasis on Fortune and through a plot structure moving from happiness to woe, then the Laud poet undoubtedly associated his poem with that group of tales. Thus, the Fortune motif in the poem indicates that the poet probably conceived of his work as a tragedy. But because Fortune is primarily an artistic device denoting genre and is not the focal point of the narrative, the Laud can be described as moving away from earlier medieval poems which attempt to explain the working of Fortune toward the later tragedies which often curse or lament Fortune but seldom focus on explaining her behavior.

Other aspects of a Providential fall are also missing. In Chaucer's poem Fortune and Destiny are linked to God, but the Laud poet attempts no such linkage. The narrator does, however, mention several times that the Trojans are without grace:

Alas Troye! what is thi grace?  
 To the fel neuere gode trace,  
 To the fel neuere gode chaunce,  
 Ne non of alle thi retenaunce!  
 Thoow thow be gay & glorious,  
 Thow were euere on-gracious!  
 Off thow hede of Cites were,  
 Blysful hap to the fel neuere! (14687-14694)

Allas! that day he [Hector] hadde no grace  
 To be at home, as him radde wace. (10547-10548)

Kyng Priamus, where was thi grace?  
 Thi happe was take fro the, alas! (8547-8548)

But the references to grace, like the personifications of Fortune and Destiny, are never explicitly related to God, and the standard explanation, that man without God's grace cannot always make those choices that will create a favorable destiny for him, is also missing, despite the obvious opportunity to introduce it. No lengthy condemnation of paganism is presented as is the case in both the Gest (4256-4458) and Lydgate's Troy Book (IV, 6921-7034). Although the medieval reader, through connotation, may have compared his own opportunity to attain grace to the pagan's graceless state, the poem itself contains no such comparison. Apparently the poet deliberately avoids making theological or philosophical concerns the focus of his work.

Since he never specifically links Fortune, Destiny, or grace to God, the Laud poet is never forced to explain God's rationale for destroying Troy, and he never discusses necessity or God's unlimited knowledge. He even omits episodes and explanations that would lead the reader to see how the fall was necessary to the subsequent pattern of history. For example, he never identifies Aeneas as the central figure in Virgil's poem or the founder of the Roman republic, as Guido, the Gest poet, and Lydgate do; and he never gives a chronology of the subsequent settlement of the European world by the survivors of Troy as Lydgate does (I, 805-917). By ignoring even these standard

implications of Providential history, the poet focuses his work on men's actions in the strict context of the fall of Troy.

This analysis of the narrator's lamentations and gnomic interpolations indicates that the poet probably designed his work in terms of medieval tragedy of Fortune, despite his statements about romance, and that the poem focuses on individual actions as the primary cause of the fall of Troy. Hinton, in his discussion of the Laud, fails to recognize that the poem is a tragedy of Fortune, depicting the fall of a city, not the fall of a prince. He indicates that the poem is not unified because the hero enters late and dies early,<sup>11</sup> a charge which is true enough if the poem is analyzed only in terms of a Hector romance. In the introduction to the poem, the author himself encourages such a reading:

Many speken of men that romaunces rede  
 That were sumtyme doughti in dede,  
 The while that god hem lyff lente,  
 That now ben ded and hennes wente:  
 ...  
 But of the worthiest wyght in wede  
 That euere by-strod any stede,  
 Spekes no man, ne in romaunce redes  
 Off his batayle ne of his dedis. (11-30)

This passage, of course, is the prelude to the announcement of Hector as the hero of the poem. But the poet indicates, too, that glorifying Hector is only a part of his intended purpose; he also plans to tell all the deeds of the Trojan war:

Herkenes now, and 3e may here  
 The werre sothe alle plenere:  
 What was the forme enchesoun,  
 The fornest skyl and resoun,  
 That alle the kynges of Grecis formast Inued  
 And the Troyens so longe pursued;  
 And how the batayle was first be-gunnen,  
 And how Troye was sithen y-wonnen;  
 And--as the storie here beris recorde--  
 Alle the dedis of euery lorde,  
 And alle the dayes that thei faught there,  
 And alle the dedis as thei were  
 Of alle the lordes that ther faught,  
 And whiche of hem here dethe þer laught;  
 And how fele termes and trewes  
 Where take be-twene Troyens and Gruwes,  
 And how longe euery trewe laste,  
 And how thai spedde when thei were paste;  
 And alle here wo and al here breste;  
 And how many tymes that thei reste  
 With-Inne ten zere that thei were thore,  
 Er that the toun distroyed wore. (65-86)

This passage is a realistic statement of the scope of the Laud; the poet gives a detailed account of the war: the battles, the truces, the men, and the deeds. The second half of the author's purpose, though not so interesting critically as his statement about creating a Hector romance, nonetheless, receives an equal amount of attention from the poet both in the above passage and also in a subsequent passage which again states his purpose (3272-3296). Hinton's analysis, then, is less than satisfactory because it fails to consider the poet's larger purpose which aims at vividly depicting the tragic fall of Troy.

Gordon Wood indicates that the Laud was written for a general audience, not for a specific patron, and that under these circumstances the Laud poet's treatment of the legend could afford to be freer than either the Gest or Lydgate's

Troy Book.<sup>12</sup> If in fact written for no specific patron, the Laud would have to rely, at least to some extent, on an appeal to contemporary literary interests. The catalog of other romance heroes is certainly meant to stimulate the audience's interest in this particular work by associating it with other well-known works. In view of the author's situation, if he was indeed not writing for a specific individual, it is perhaps best to understand the opening remarks on Hector and romance as an attempt to revitalize familiar material by giving it a fashionable form. The Laud's reputation as a Hector romance, then, is probably a modern exaggeration based on the author's own eagerness to make his story appealing. A re-evaluation ought to be based on the poet's total statement of purpose--that is, on both the idea of a Hector romance and the narration of all the events of the war--and on the framework he creates through his emphasis on Fortune. The Laud, like Chaucer's romance Troilus and Criseyde, ought to be discussed in terms of tragedy;<sup>13</sup> and the critical charges of disunity ought to be reassessed, again in terms of the author's total statement of purpose and the framework he creates.

Any assessment of the poem, however, would have to conclude that the poet fails to create a real feeling of tragedy because he does not sufficiently develop a character or a set of characters with whom the reader can identify. The poem also lacks a building plot line so that the Aristotelian principle of unity and the subordination

of all the parts to one objective is not immediately apparent. The role of the narrator lends a dramatic atmosphere to the poem, but unfortunately this atmosphere is offset and obscured by the length of the poem and the tedious repetition of the battles. The Laud does make a distinct innovation in the Troy story, however, by developing a persona who focuses on the tragic nature of the fall. Both the Gest and Lydgate's Troy Book are narrated by the poet-translators themselves, who aim at moral and scholastic edification. But the Laud poet does not rely on Guido's extensive proverbs to give his work a moral tenor. Instead he focuses on the action itself, using the narrator as a device to highlight those actions which he wishes to emphasize. Admittedly then, the poem is not a highly successful tragedy, but in the development of the tale itself the Laud turns away from the older didactic traditions and moves into the realm of the story for the sake of entertainment, leaving the reader to draw his own moral conclusions from the action itself and the narrator's interpolations.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Willard Farnham, The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1936), p. 124.

<sup>2</sup>A discussion of the Geste poet's purpose in translating and the major deviations from his source is presented in Gordon R. Wood's "The Middle English Alliterative Destruction of Troy: A Critical Study," Diss. Princeton, 1952.

<sup>3</sup>Larry A. Benson, "The Alliterative Morte Arthure and Medieval Tragedy," TSL, XI (1965), 80-81.

<sup>4</sup>Frederick B. Artz, Les idées et les lettres, trans. by C.W. Hollister (Paris, 1932), p. 192, quoted in The Twelfth Century Renaissance, ed. by C.W. Hollister (New York, 1969), p. 85.

<sup>5</sup>Roy Battenhouse, Shakespeare's Tragedy: Its Art and Its Christian Premises (Bloomington, 1969), p. 138.

<sup>6</sup>Howard R. Patch, The Goddess Fortuna in Medieval Literature (Cambridge, Mass., 1927), p. 69.

<sup>7</sup>Edmund Brock (ed.), Morte Arthure; or, the Death of Arthur, Early English Text Society, 8 (London, 1871).

<sup>8</sup>George Kane, Middle English Literature (London, 1951), p. 27.

<sup>9</sup>Patch, pp. 45, 61, 148.

<sup>10</sup>Patch, pp. 67-72.

<sup>11</sup>D.N. Hinton, "A Study of the Middle English Poems Relating to the Destruction of Troy," Diss. Univ. of Wisconsin, 1957, p. 194.

<sup>12</sup>Gordon R. Wood, "The Middle English Alliterative Destruction of Troy: A Critical Study," Diss. Princeton, 1952, pp. 22-23.

<sup>13</sup>D.W. Robertson, Jr., "Chaucerian Tragedy," ELH, XIX (1952), 1-37.



### III. STRUCTURE AND THEME

The theme of revenge is usually associated with the Renaissance, primarily because the revenge tragedy became fashionable at that time. But the middle ages was also interested in revenge. Fredson Bowers shows that social concerns go back even to the Old English period.<sup>1</sup> Mary Mroz finds that medieval theologians and poets were interested in the subject.<sup>2</sup> William Matthews discusses revenge in the alliterative Morte Arthure,<sup>3</sup> and many episodes of the Canterbury Tales involve revenge. Despite the available material, however, revenge is seldom associated with the middle ages in the same way that it is with the Renaissance. The association with the Renaissance is due in part to the striking form of the revenge tragedy, which usually involves sensational horrors, a scheming villain, insanity, and intrigue--characteristics making it easy to identify and discuss. Such a striking form does not usually accompany the motif in the medieval period; consequently, the idea receives little scholarly attention. The following chapter tries to show that the Laud, though not a drama, contains most of the characteristics of the Renaissance revenge tragedy and is, thus, a transitional piece between the earlier period, which was interested in the theme,

and the later period, which adopted a striking form for the theme. A comparison of similar episodes in the Laud and the Gest indicates that the Laud poet consistently emphasizes revenge, making it the dominant theme of the poem. Madness, treachery, brutality, and love are all complementary or contrasting themes. The presence of each idea is first demonstrated and then related to the Renaissance revenge plays.

The greater part of the Laud, that is, the recitation of the second destruction of Troy, is episodic, focusing for the most part on each day's battle. The poet usually tells first of the preparation, then of the general battle scene, then of the personal encounters, and finally of the night's activities. These day-to-day accounts of the war are relieved with episodes of truce. Truces most often involve councils, burials, and recoveries, but are always closely linked with the preceding or following war activities. Since the battle scenes form the heart of the narrative, they will be investigated first, and the truces will be related to them.

Generally, the battles contain an interior continuity; that is, the individual encounters within the larger battle are related to each other. For example, in the Gest Penthesilea's first encounter with the Greeks begins "Pantasilia so presit proud Menelaus, /<sup>h</sup>at he gird hym to ground with a grym dynt" (10873-10874). The Laud, however, records the action this way:

Menelaus hadde grete envy  
 Off that quene Pantasaly,  
 That sche the Gregais so defouled;  
 On hir that tyme ful foule he schouled  
 And seyde: "that he wolde to hir ride  
 To se whether sche wolde him abyde."  
 He rode to hir with mochel Ire. (16155-16161)

Here Penthesilea does not press Menelaus; rather, he approaches her through the specific motivation of envy for her success in killing his compatriots. In the Gest Penthesilea's attack is not related to any preceding event, but in the Laud her previous action prompts Menelaus' action. This is only one of many instances in which the Laud poet alters the usual narrative to provide motivation for a character's action.

In the Gest, the next encounter is recorded this way:

Dyomede the derfe drofe to þe gwene,  
 With a course of his caple, and a kene speire.  
 Þat mighty hym met with a mayn stroke,  
 Þat he bend in the backe to þe bare sadell,  
 Vnneth held hym on horse for harme þat heþolet.  
 (10877-10881)

The Laud, however, gives this version:

Diomedes, that douzti kyng,  
 By-held that tyme that Iustyng,  
 He saw the kyng falle a-down,  
 Vp the fete & doun the croun;  
 His hors was lorn, & he on fote,  
 He seyde: "ther-on he scholde do bote,  
 That sturdy strok scholde sche abyde."  
 He rode thanne to Pantasalye  
 With al the myght that euere he hadde. (16169-16177)

Here Diomedes' action is prompted by a desire to make Penthesilea "abye," "pay for," her treatment of a fellow warrior. Thus, the Laud poet shows that the two actions, Menelaus' attack on Penthesilea and Diomedes' vengeance,

are clearly connected, one being motivated by the other through revenge. The Gest poet, however, leaves the two encounters essentially unconnected because he never overtly says that Diomedes wants to revenge Menelaus.

This is not to say that the Gest poet never uses one encounter to motivate another. Occasionally a character in the Gest does act on vengeful motives. For example, Thelamon turns to Penthesilea "To venge of hir velany" (10885) in besting Diomedes. This phrase is the only indication of vengeance in the episode; no elaboration is made. But the Laud presents a more emphatic version:

Kyng Thelaman stode euere alone  
 And saw the dedis that sche had done,  
 ...  
 Gret envy hadde he ther-ate,  
 Opon hys hors ther he sate;  
 He wex for tene blak as Cole,  
 That schame myght he no lengur thole  
 That sche hadde done the kynges two,  
 He wolde assaye what he myght do:  
 He toke a spere of stalworthe tre,--  
 For he on hir wolde venged be. (16191-16208)

The Laud paints more than the vengeance; it makes clear the motivations to vengeance--envy, anger, and shame. By simply expanding the description of a character's attitude, the poet focuses on revenge.

The Laud poet also alters the narrative to show the all-encompassing nature of revenge. The Gest indicates that Diomedes acts out of concern for Thelamon, who is taken prisoner by Penthesilea:

Diomede, þat Duke was duly beside,  
 Negh wode of his wit for þe wale kyng;  
 So he fore þere in fight with his fell strokes,  
 þat the lede fro the ladis lawse away past.  
 (10894-10897)

The Laud poet, however, extends the personal revenge so that it affects the total battlefield:

But Diomedes, when he was resen,  
Saw Thelaman was taken to prison,  
Toward the toun he saw him go,--  
Lord god, that him was wo!  
He blewe his horn & samed his men,  
Ther come aboute him thousand ten

...  
He seyde: 'felawes, may ze not se  
How Thelaman, that doghti knyzt,  
With hem of Troye is discomfyzt?  
Lo! where thei lede him toward toun  
Ouer dale and ouer down!  
But sicurly, if I may spede,  
Thei schal him not to Troye lede.  
I zow be-seke, falawes myne alle,  
For any-thing that may be-falle:  
In this gret nede fayle me not,  
Til I haue him fro hem y-brouzt!' (16225-16244)

Here the Laud poet stresses Diomedes' emotional reaction and dramatizes his desire for revenge. By involving all Diomedes' men, the poet also shows that everyone in a situation of war is prone to revenge.

In the Gest, this series of encounters finally prompts Penthesilea to win victory on the battlefield:

^Pan Pantasilia the pert with a pure steuyn,  
Criet on hir company with a cant wille;  
Assemblit hir sorte on a sad hepe,  
And so fuersly pai faght with the felle grekes,  
Thurgh helpe of ^pat hynd, and hir hed maidons,  
^pat all fell to ^he flight, & the feld leuyt.  
(10898-10903)

But in the Laud, Penthesilea definitely acts out of vengeance and communicates motivations of revenge to her followers:

When the quene herde it say  
How he from hem was led away,  
For wratthe sche wax ner wode,--  
So sterne sche was In hir mode.  
That ladi thanne, Pantasalye,  
To hir Maydenes by-gan to crye

And gadered hem vpon a route;  
When thei were comen hir aboute,

...  
Sche seyde: 'are 3e not aschamed  
That this kyng is take fro 3ow?  
Felawes myn, I pray 3ow now:  
For so haue I euere gode chaunce,  
Thei schal bye his [Thelamon's] lyueraunce.'  
(16255-16276)

Again the poet stresses the character's emotional reaction and dramatizes her desire for revenge. He also shows how one vengeful action leads to another until whole groups of people are involved.

These comparisons show that the Laud poet alters the tale, even in minor episodes, to emphasize the idea of revenge. The structural difference between the two versions of this episode is that the Laud makes clear the connections between encounters, whether single or massive, showing them to be related by a personal desire for revenge which springs from envy, anger, or shame; while the Gest makes clear the connections between encounters, whether single or massive, showing them to be related by a personal desire for revenge which springs from envy, anger, or shame; while the Gest makes no such connection. The Laud poet provides motivation, an essential part of drama, and through conversation, dramatizes the action.

Although every encounter in the Laud is not prompted by revenge, it is usually the principle underlying the progression of each day's events, a progression which ends with an encounter between two major characters, be it Hector and Achilles, Achilles and Memnon, or Penthesilea

and Diomedes. By using such a structure, the poet achieves a building plot action within each battle. For example, in the battle beginning with line 12473, the following encounters occur: Dephebus kills Croesus; the Greeks take general revenge in which Thelamon kills Sisene, Priam's son; Dephebus wounds Thelamon; Palamydes fatally wounds Dephebus and kills Sarpedon; Paris kills Palamydes and retreats; the Greeks retreat with their dead leader Palamydes; the Trojans turn and overrun the Greek camp; and Nestor and Thelamon, now well enough to fight, stave off the attack until night. In this battle the action all leads to the encounter between Palamydes and Paris; the rest of the action is largely resultant. This episode and the one previously examined typify the structure of the battles because nearly all of them depend on the revenge motif for continuity.

Since the Laud lacks a building plot line over all, the rising action of each battle helps to maintain the reader's interest. Unfortunately, the battles are repetitious because they all center on revenge and because so many battles are recited. The success of the tragedy in the alliterative Morte Arthure depends partially on the growing victory in battle as opposed to Arthur's declining morality.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, the building action of the love affair in Troilus and Criseyde intensifies the final separation and thus underscores the tragedy: the lovers move gradually together, but are suddenly wrenched apart.



The Laud contains no building plot action to engross the reader. Instead, each episode moves deeper and deeper into the revenge motif, and the nature of the characters grows successively worse so that finally Pirrus, the avenger who also desecrates the bodies of his victims, and Antenor and Aeneas, the betrayers of Troy, are the focus of the reader's attention. The steady decline is almost more overwhelming than tragic, and the suspense within each battle is lost in the morass of battles. Consequently, the Laud is structurally deficient; but it does have a theme which unifies the episodes, and it clearly defines the emotions of envy, anger, and shame as factors motivating revenge.

Incidents which provoke revenge are also clearly delineated by the Laud poet. In the battle relating Palamydes' death (12473ff outlined above), the individual encounters all spring from the desire to avenge friends or relatives, and the melodramatic scenes during and after the battle in which the wounded Dephebus spurs Paris to revenge further elaborate the theme. Although other versions of the Troy story link some conflicts to revenge for injury to friends or relatives, the Laud poet exaggerates the theme by making it the motivating factor in most encounters. In fact, avenging the death or injury of a loved one becomes so important an explanation for action on the battlefield that the narrator summarizes the action of one battle

solely in terms of encounters prompted by concern for friends:

Euerychon wolde his frend rescowe,  
Than comes he & he also  
And girdes his bak euen a-two.  
And thus ferd thei fro that thei met,  
Til the sonne was down set. (9684-9688)

The vengeance need not always be taken to right a wrong done a friend or relative, as Paris avenges Dephebus, or to satisfy one's own envy of another's prowess, as Menelaus attempts to avenge himself on Penthesilea; vengeance may be taken as the result of a verbal insult. For example, in the Gest, Episcropus and Cedius set upon Hector:

Ephistafus hym [Hector] presit with his proude wordes,  
As a ribold with reueray in his Roide speche,  
Sythen spurnit hym dispitously with aspeire felle;  
But he hurt not pat hynd, ne hade hym to ground;  
Ne the deire of his dynt dasit hym but litle...  
Ector, wrathed at his wordis, waynit at the kyng,  
pat he gird to be ground and the gost yald;  
pen warpid he bes wordis in his wild hate:--  
"ffor pou of flytyng was fuerse with frekes vppon lyue  
Go dresse be to dedmen, & dyn here a while." (7650-7659)

The Laud poet expands the insult, making it both an emphatic motivation for the battle and an opportunity to praise Hector:

Episcropus, that ape and owle,  
Spak to Ector wordes foule,  
He called him "fitz-a-putayn,"  
And seyth: "he was a cherl velayn."  
Than seide Ector: 'as I am knyzt,  
Thow schalt of me haue a foul dispit,  
Of me, thow kyng Episcropus,--  
Thow hast defouled me thus!' (7445-7452)

When Episcropus defies him again, Hector launches into a twenty-four line defense of himself and his lineage,

ending with personal invective against his attacker:

Whi scholde I now fle a glotoun,  
 Suche a caytyff, such a wrecche!  
 I holde the not worth a fecche! (7476-7478)

Then the actual encounter begins which in turn sets off a chain of events that involves both armies and much bloodshed.

The Laud poet expands this scene by adding vituperative dialogue. While quarrels in the Gest seldom take the form of direct discourse, in the Laud they are often recounted directly and at great length. Through these elaborations the poet underscores insult as one cause of revenge. Renaissance drama, too, is full of insults and invective which lead to revenge; the opening scene of Romeo and Juliet is a familiar example. There the dialogue is more sophisticated than the threats and name-calling in the Laud; but the tradition is the same. Both works show insult as one cause of revenge.

Vengeance may also be prompted by personal injury, as when Hector takes revenge after Achilles unhorses him:

Ector sleeves and Ector felles;  
 His hors takyng dere he selles;  
 He riues helmes and cleues hedes;  
 Ther is no Gregeis that him (ne) dredes.  
 Ther died for him on that sond  
 Sixti that neuere layde on him hond. (7863-7868)

Sometimes the injury is only attempted as when an unnamed Greek duke presses Hector fiercely:

Ector was with-al anoyed:  
 'Now is my myȝt strongly distroyed,'  
 Ector sayde, 'whan I schal thole  
 Off on that is not worth a cole  
 Suche vilony and suche repruse.

I may wel say, I am refuyse  
 Off alle the kynges sones of Troye,  
 When that I suffre of suche a boye  
 Suche vilonye to me be done,--  
 Ne se I neuere sonne ne mone!  
 But thow schalt dere thi strokes a-bye,  
 Thi hardines and thi folye!  
 I schal kembe thi zelowelokke!  
 He zaff the duk suche a knokke,  
 That helm and coyfe In-sunder zede;  
 He cleue him down vnto his stede,  
 That he fel down on that other side.  
 'Now wil thow ziff me leue for to ride,  
 Where that I loue & thow not me lette!  
 Now hastow that I the be-hette!" (7671-7690)

This encounter, including Hector's speech, is not contained in the Gest or Lydgate's Troy Book. The Laud poet apparently expanded his material to include still another episode dramatizing the idea of revenge.

George Hofstrand indicates that the Laud poet's version of the Troy story as compared to the Gest and Lydgate's Troy Book is the result of a more imaginative mind.<sup>5</sup> Imagination is undoubtedly a distinguishing characteristic of the poem when compared to the other two versions, but the Laud poet goes beyond translation. He restructures and expands the tale so that the entire work focuses on the idea of revenge. In the poem the situations of war, including insult, injury, and death, provoke retaliation; consequently, nearly every event of the war is the result of someone's personal revenge. The poet explains the massive destruction in terms of individual actions, but these actions spring from similar types of provocation. The Laud does not present a full-blown concept of individualism in terms of the causes of revenge, but it does alter the standard narrative to stress individual

acts of revenge.

Revenge in the Laud is either planned or it arises spontaneously from the situation. As the poet represents it, revenge occurring on the battlefield is usually not premeditated. It develops naturally out of a character's reactions to the immediate circumstances. Usually these reactions consist of an excessive emotion, often described in terms of madness or animalism. Thus, Hector at the death of Margariton completely changes:

His colour chaunged, his herte ros,  
For tene Ector he wode gos:  
He rolled his eyen as best ramage,  
As he hadde fallen In a rage. (10511-10514)

Achilles, forgetting Pollexena and rushing to battle, is described as follows:

Achilles rides as a man mad,  
For his men was he not glad;  
He myght that tene no lenger thole,  
He brende In yre as any cole;  
When he herde hem so grysly grone,  
For hem he made moche mone:  
As lyoun rampyng forth he went. (14191-14197)

Although these reactions are somewhat stylized, they represent a distinctive interpretation of the Troy material. For example, the Egerton MS. of the Seege makes only three references to "wodness" and those all consist of the simile as a "wood" lion (1137, 1403, 1476). Lydgate uses it often, but for a variety of purposes. Sometimes it means something like "lunatic": a person would have to be "wood" to trust women (I, 1845), to believe he could know Fortune's course (II, 3036), or to do observances to the gods

(IV, 6992). Sometimes, however, the word is used to indicate animal irrationality: Priam enters battle like a "wood" lion (I, 4118); Pelleus, on the battlefield, is "wood, as he wer falle in rage" (I, 4133); and Hercules is like a "lyoun, wood and dispitous" (I, 4283). Sometimes the usage is closer to anger than lunacy or excessive emotionalism: the bulls Jason must tame are "wood and irous" (I, 284) and Achilles has a "wood" visage when the Greek leaders fail to agree to a peace (IV, 1154). In other words, Lydgate uses the term in its full range of lexical meanings. He does not, as the Laud poet does, confine his usage to descriptions of the emotional excess accompanying grief or anger, nor does he use it in any singular set of circumstances, as the Laud poet does.

On the other hand, the Gest and the Laud are alike in that "wode" or "wodness" occurs often and primarily in connection with battle scenes. Usually, however, the alliterative line in the Gest determines the usage. Consequently, three formulaic patterns account for most of the occurrences of the term. When the phrase "wod of (or in) his wit" falls in the second half-line, the word "wex" most often occurs in the first half. If the phrase falls in the first half-line, any of a number of words appear--"wan," "wild," "wale," "wo," "walt"--but most often "wild" as in "as wode in his wit as a wild bore" (6813). "Wode" is often used to modify nouns--"wode ire," "honger," "hate," "anger," "stoure"--and it is sometimes



found in the phrase "walte (or welt) into wodnes." The Gest contains only two instances which amplify the idea of madness. One occurs before Achilles goes to battle to save his Myrmidons from Troilus' fury:

[He] Welt into wodnes, wan to his armys,  
 Strode on a stith horse, stroke into batell.  
 He fore with his fos in his felle angur,  
 As a wolfe in his wodenes with wethurs in fold.  
 (10204-10207)

The repetition of "wodnes" and the introduction of a non-formulaic simile emphasize Achilles' irrationality. The passage is a good introduction to an action which ends ultimately in dragging Troilus' corpse around the battlefield. The other amplification of madness describes Hecuba's reaction to the murder of Pollexena:

Scho welt into wodnes, & hir wit leuyt,  
 And ran furthe ravis ruthe to beholde.  
 Scho bete hom bitturly with hir bare teth,  
 And with stonys in ~~pe~~ strete strok hom to ground.  
 (12148-12151)

The restatement of madness in terms of raging and the immediate action of madness emphasize the phrase "welt into wodnes."

The Laud poet, too, uses madness sometimes in an almost formulaic way, completing the second half of one line in a couplet with the phrase "as he (or thei) were wode." But he usually elaborates the motif, describing specific actions that show the extent of the madness. For example, when Hector is unhorsed, he is described as follows:

He loked aboute as he were wode,  
 And swor I-tened and he sporles,  
 The blod ran out at his nase-throlles;



When he fro him his hors saw lede,  
 Mouthe & nase began to blede,  
 For tene & wo his hew chaunged. (7834-7839)

When Achilles learns that Troilus is slaying the Myrmidons,  
 he reacts emotionally:

Achilles chaunged al his mode,  
 He lokod aboute as he were wode  
 When he herde this tydynges:  
 He clapped his hondes, and alle his rynges  
 Sicurly In-sonder brast;  
 To and fro his armes he cast,  
 As he hadde ben a wod man;  
 Wel harde to swete he be-gan. (14157-14164)

The responses here are certainly melodramatic exaggerations,  
 but they vividly detail the character's emotional intensity.

The Laud poet uses madness almost exclusively to  
 describe men's reactions to battle situations, and generally  
 it precedes a specific slaying or encounter. Thus, Hector,  
 as he rides to Patroclus, is described as pricking his  
 steed "as he were wode, /That alle his sides ran on blode"  
 (4965-4966), and just before the slaying, "he wex thenne  
 wood and wroth I-now" (4981). Achilles, describing the  
 death of Patroclus, emphasizes the quality of madness  
 about Hector:

I hate the mochel, for my frend  
 That thow sclow the formast day  
 In thi wodeness and thi deray. (8318-8320)

Madness obstructs any reasoning process that might  
 normally be involved in making a decision. Hector is  
 shown as wise and reasonable in the first council scene  
 when he tells his father why the Trojans should not risk  
 a war with the Greeks (2319-2372), and the narrator later

tells us Priam should have listened to his son (3600-3606). Yet Hector's emotional response to Margariton's death drowns out the more cautious voices of Andromache, Hecuba, and Priam. In fact, events of the war and of this battle in particular have led him to shun his own advice. He says to Troilus before the first formal battle:

By-fore these kyng(es) & knyghtes here,  
That thow be wyse and not sauage;  
3if the not to outrage!  
I drede me sore, thi hastines,  
Thi noble herte, and thi hardines  
Schal make the bold and vs schent;  
But thow take gode avisement,  
Vnto thi-self to-day take hede! (4758-4765)

In haste and outrage, Hector goes to battle, though ordered not to, so that he can avenge the death of his brother, Margariton, and is ultimately killed. Through his madness Hector fulfills a destiny he might otherwise have overcome had he chosen to stay home (9906-9908).

This particular amplification in the Laud accounts for Hector's behavior and thus is different from other English versions. The Gest says briefly:

Ector, wode of his wit for woo of his brother,  
Haspit on his helme, & his horse toke;  
Went out wightly, vnwetyng his fader. (8592-8594)

Lydgate describes Hector as furious: "Of verray Ire his herte gan to colde, /And seide, platly, with-oute more delay, /He wolde avenge his [Margariton's] deth *þe* same day" (III, 5238-5240). But the Laud, by using the phrases "as best ramage," "fallen In a rage," and "rolled his eyen" in addition to the bald statement that "he wode gos,"

emphasizes Hector's irrationality.

Some revenge actions, then, are the result of madness stemming from emotional responses to events on the battlefield. They are not the result of reasoned action and are sometimes quite contrary to the actor's normal character. The major characters are not the only ones subject to madness; the Greeks and Trojans are often described as running against one another madly:

Eche slo other, as thei were wode. (9677)

Euerychon of hem on other renne,  
Thei ferde as it had ben wod menne. (11721)

Thei ran togeder as wode thinges. (13683)

Echon of hem on other schet--  
As thei hadde ben wode & mad. (13926-13927)

Yet in times of truce the two peoples are described as singing, dancing, hunting, and visiting together:

Then were the Troiens mury & glad,  
When thei leue of Ector had,  
That thei scholde reste so longe;  
Many man for Ioye songe.  
Hit was gret murthe & Ioye  
To hem of Grece and eke of Troye,  
That trewe is tane and last so longe;  
That thei myght bothe ride & gonge  
To take her murthe and her solace,  
Eche man is glad In that place. (8199-8208)

And al the while the trewes held,  
The(i) speke to-geder In toun & ffield. (8227-8228)

The while the festes thus endured,  
And eueryche were to other ensured,  
Thei of Troye hadde here comyng  
To hem of Grece & here spekyng;  
And Gregeis com In-to the toun  
And where thei wolde vp & down,  
Saue & sound where so hem liked;  
Thei fond no man that hem be-swiked. (11941-11948)

The contrasts here show the effects of war on human behavior. As Hector's actions on the battlefield are different from those in the council scenes, so are all people's actions different in battle than in peace. The mad behavior of men in wartime results in the slaughter of the same men who shared the happier experiences of peacetime.

The activities of both the Trojans and the Greeks during peace also contrast with the extreme suffering caused by the war. Rather than breaking the narrative into books as Guido, the Gest poet, and Lydgate do, the Laud poet inserts descriptions of the night's activities and of preparations for battle. These descriptions stress the effects of war in terms of the suffering and sorrow that has occurred or that will occur. For example, the approaching battles are often preceded by descriptions of general apprehension among the people:

Now eche man to fyght him zares,  
 Now euery wiff ffor hir lord cares  
 A-zeyn that nexte semble,  
 For no man wot how it schal be,--  
 When thei gon out at morwen-tyde,  
 Who schal dye, and who schal abyde?  
 Alle curses that ilke man,  
 On hem the werre furst by-gan,  
 Fader and Moder and alle his kyn  
 For sorwe and wo that thei ben In. (8607-8616)

The night's activities often show the weariness of the fighters and the general atmosphere of sorrow for the day's events:

Thei zede euen home to her hous,  
 Thei fond ther many a sori spous,  
 That sori were for here husbandis;

Some lay dede on the sondes:  
 The wyues of Troye made gret mornynge;  
 Amonges the Gregeis was gret roryng,  
 Thei blew and cried--as wilde bere brayes--  
 For her frendes that died tho dayes. (8007-8014)

At the end of a truce, mirth is often juxtaposed to the coming sorrow:

Thei wente alle hom to here ostel,  
 Thei daunsed & sang & made revel.  
 The terme is went & passed a-way,  
 The morwe next schal be her day  
 That thei schal fyght to-gedur In feld,  
 Ther schal be reuen many a scheld,  
 Many a bryght basenet  
 Schal be with blod foule y-wet. (13315-13322)

These passages describing life apart from the battlefield, then, tend to emphasize the opposite effects which the situations of war and peace have on the people; and the mad behavior, an outgrowth of the warring situation, is the direct cause of the ultimate sorrow.

Madness, of course, is a major and often disputed aspect of Renaissance revenge tragedy. In Hamlet and the Spanish Tragedy madness grows out of sorrow for the death of a loved one and out of the frustrated urge to vengeance. Hieronimo's revenge is accomplished while he is in one of these states of frenzy; biting off his tongue is certainly an indication of the emotional level he has reached. Yet, like the characters in the Laud who ride off madly seeking revenge in battle, Hieronimo has enough sanity to carry out his plan. His urge to revenge, like Hector's, is a form of temporary madness obliterating other alternatives that may be more reasonable than the actual course of

action taken. The exact nature of Hamlet's madness has plagued critics for some time. Whether it is real, as his distraught behavior in Ophelia's chamber seems to indicate, or whether it is only feigned, as he implies to Horatio and Marcellus it will be, Hamlet's madness is not the pathetic variety Ophelia's is. If he is mad, then his madness is akin to Hieronimo's, arising out of anxiety and frustration and yet allowing him to plan revenge, though not to carry it out. The preceding analysis of madness in the Laud indicates that there is probably a literary tradition in which madness, a natural outgrowth of grief or anger, often precedes or accompanies revenge, but does not render the avenger incapable of carrying out his plan.

In the individual conflicts, especially the ones involving madness, revenge is usually unpremeditated, arising from responses to immediate situations; but two major episodes in the Troy story involve planned retaliation--Achilles and the Greeks plan revenge on Hector, and Hecuba plots against Achilles. The Laud poet generally gives a much fuller account of these episodes than the Gest poet or Lydgate. For example, after the second formal battle of the war, Agamemnon calls a council to decide what strategy the Greeks should pursue. The Gest poet reports the meeting in eighteen lines; there is no dramatization. In the Laud, the council is preceded by the Greek army lamenting Hector's strength and their own

inadequacy. Because he is aware of this feeling of unrest among the people, Agamemnon decides Hector must be killed. He calls a council specifically for discussing that matter. Including such dramatic material builds the character of Hector, provides motivation for calling the council, and in general adds plausibility to the episode.

Through exchange of dialogue in the council, the Laud poet continues the dramatization and underscores the idea of trickery. The Gest records only one reference to "soteltie" (7359). In the Laud, however, Agamemnon's first speech introduces the idea of "quayntise" in the killing of Hector. A general response is made by those present, but Agamemnon interrupts their list of reasons for killing Hector by appealing to their manhood and again urges trickery: "Whi ne scle 3e him, and make him die /With som tresoun and ffelonye?" (6449-6450). When members of the council appeal to Achilles to carry out the plan, they indicate that he is not to do it by strength:

Opon thi strengthe truste thow nought,  
But on thi wit and on thi scleyght,  
And holde the euere fro him on heyght;  
Whan thow him sees in a myscheef,  
Than schaltow him dedly greef  
By thi strengthe and thi wit;  
So schal we of him be qwit. (6480-6486)

The Laud poet's interpretation of the scene emphasizes Hector's awesome strength and the Greeks' determination to use subtlety.

In the ensuing battle Achilles attempts to carry out his assignment. The Gest briefly records the encounter:



þen Achilles cherfull, & his choise cosyn  
 Toax, þat other, a tore mon of strenght,  
 Ayren vnto Ector angardly sore!  
 With the strenght of þor stroke, & hor store fare,  
 The helme of his hed þai hurlit to peces; .....  
 Woundit hym wickedly with wepon aboue,  
 þat þe Rinels of red blode ran down his chekes.  
 (7500-7506)

Hector then retaliates by cutting off half Thoas' nose, and the encounter ends when Hector's brothers come to aid him. The sequence of events within the encounter is the same in the Laud, but again shows dramatization. Achilles calls Thoas to him and delivers a speech. He first pictures Hector's slaughter of the Greeks and then suggests that because Hector is tired the two of them should attack and overpower him. Achilles' final words are "And so schal we on him be wroken!" (6873), introducing the specific idea of revenge as his motivation. The Laud poet's interpretation of the encounter suggests that he is trying to link it overtly with the previous council scene. Rather than simply motivating his characters to attack Hector out of anger (Gest, 7503), the Laud poet indicates their behavior is a revenge trick: Hector is now tired and the two Greeks can easily overpower him.

The revenge motif between Achilles and Hector is again elaborated during the ensuing truce when Hector goes to the Greek camp and is invited to Achilles' tent. The Laud and the Gest handle the account comparably, up to the point of Hector's reply. This speech is significant because it supplies plausible motivation for Hector's challenge to Achilles:

Ther was neuere theff In no hostage,  
 That wayted better his a-vauntage,  
 To do his stelthe and his robrye,  
 Than thow waytest me In skolkerye;  
 But thow hast ben glad al-wey, to ride  
 With broken hede and bloody syde. (8357-8362)

By challenging Achilles to fight openly, Hector undercuts the Greek scheme to kill him by sleight. Achilles' reply, a speech contained in no other English version, indicates that the Greek hero interprets the challenge as a counter-move by Hector to stop the Greek plot:

I se rizt wel thi couetise:  
 Thow settes on me In alle wyse,  
 To fight with me In feld alone. (8443-8445)

Hector suggests that individual combat is the honorable way to end the war since it involves only two people and not both armies:

And zit may thow almes the wyne,--  
 For we do euel and mychel synne,  
 Off mannes blod that we don spille,--  
 Iff that thow wol holde ther-tille. (8411-8414)

By emphasizing treachery in this scene, the Laud poet successfully links it to the two previous passages involving treachery, thus establishing a kind of narrative motif which recurs periodically and ends with Achilles' murder of the unarmed Hector. By contrasting Hector's openness to Achilles' covert intentions, the poet stresses the unchivalric nature of Achilles' revenge through treachery; and because this method of revenge was determined by the Greek council, the entire Greek leadership is presented as unheroic:

In this whole series of encounters between Hector and

Achilles, the Laud poet expands the standard narrative to emphasize treachery. This same principle is involved in Hecuba's revenge on Achilles. Her motivation for revenge is rooted in the shame she feels when Priam reprimands her for condoning the Pollexena-Achilles match:

Hectuba was sore aschamed  
 Off here lord that sche was blamed,  
 Hir Angred sore that euere spak sche  
 Ther-of wordes two or thre;  
 Sche cursed offte his wickednesse,  
 His gylrie and his falsnesse. (14339-14344)

In the Gest and Lydgate's Troy Book Hecuba is prompted to revenge by the death of Troilus. But the Laud poet motivates her to vengeance as he has motivated his other characters, through the emotions of shame and anger.

The actual murder of Achilles in the temple is brutal enough, but the horror is intensified by Achilles' high spirits at the prospect of the marriage ceremony. Two passages describe Achilles' joy and anticipation (15325-15331; 15355-15360). The contrast makes Hecuba's revenge just as dastardly as Achilles' revenge on the unarmed Hector. After the murder, the narrator delivers the only antifeminist passage in the whole of the Laud. Significantly enough, the woman is condemned not for her lust, as Helen and Medea are in the Gest and Lydgate's Troy Book, or for her faithlessness, as Criseyde sometimes is, but for her treachery:

And thus was Achilles done to ded  
 Thorow a wicked woman red,  
 Thorow her sleght & consayl  
 Died the knyght with-oute fayl.

And so hath many a-nother man  
 Died thorow red of a womman:  
 That neuere were so gode knyghtes  
 Off ffairnes, of connyng, ne of myghtes,  
 The beste body that euere ete bred  
 Thorow fals wymmen haue ben ded. (15439-15448)

The narrator indicates that this premeditated revenge, which can only be accomplished through deceit, is, in both cases, dishonorable. Yet the narrator makes no commentary on individual acts of spontaneous revenge. He laments the numbers killed and disparages the awful slaughter that revenge causes, but he never calls Hector or any of the other characters "false" or "wicked" for running madly out to slaughter the enemy. Of the two types of revenge, the one that occurs immediately out of the circumstances and emotional excesses is somehow more justifiable than the revenge that is rationally planned and carried out.

The Renaissance revenge plays also depict these two types of revenge. Hamlet can not murder the praying Claudius and still be heroic. He can, however, respond spontaneously to the King's clear treachery in the final scene and still be worthy of the reader's admiration. In the Spanish Tragedy, Hieronimo is vindicated because he is possessed with a madness, originating in grief, that will finally bring about justice. In Titus Andronicus, however, there is no motif of madness, although the perfect opportunity for such a motif is developed. Tamora pleads with Titus to save her son Alarbus; but instead of falling into madness when Alarbus is killed, she immediately swears

revenge on Titus and his progeny. She is then motivated throughout the rest of the play by a hatred that condones deception, torture, and murder. In the examples of Hieronimo and Hamlet, the poets have created a situation in which the avenger seeks justice, but can find no means outside his own efficacy to accomplish that justice. In the case of Tamora, all principles of justice are eradicated; the innocent Lavinia suffers for a crime she had no part in.

Both types of revenge are contained in the Laud; and although the narrator laments the effects of both kinds, his sympathy lies with Hector's spontaneous revenge rather than with Hecuba's relentless plot. In the same way, the readers' sympathies lie with Hamlet when he spontaneously avenges himself as they probably would not, had he murdered Claudius while the latter was in prayer.

The important revenge plots in the Laud center about Achilles and Hector, Achilles and Memnon, Achilles and Troilus, Hecuba and Achilles, Pirrus and Penthesilea, and Aeneas and Priam. When one of these characters successfully bests the other, a new character steps in to avenge the dead member. Because of this structure, revenge is represented as a kind of on-going process which ends in the total destruction of one line.

Total destruction of those characters who claimed the reader's sympathy and of many characters who did not is another characteristic of the revenge tragedy. Few of

the most prominent characters are left alive and often the stage is littered with bodies at the close of the play. Of course no stage or actors are involved in the Laud, but the narrative does end in the slaughter of all the Trojans except the priest Helenus, the traitors, and two women--Andromache and Helen. Thus, the best of the Trojan line is annihilated, and only the unchivalric Greeks are left, much reduced in number with nothing to show for their victory except the spoils of a once great people. Thus, the poem and the plays both recognize the massive effects of revenge.

By expanding the standard narrative in both major and minor episodes, the Laud poet achieves an overwhelming thematic effect. He shows the varied nature of revenge, both premeditated and spontaneous, the emotions that precede it, and the circumstances that cause it. Since one revenge encounter naturally motivates another, the poet is able to use the theme as a structural device to establish a narrative continuity. The poem shows that in wartime all the characters, heroic and unheroic alike, are motivated by revenge.

One love story breaks the preoccupation with revenge. Achilles sees Pollexena in the temple during a truce, falls in love with her, asks for her hand in marriage on the condition that he persuade the Greeks to leave, and then refuses to go to battle to accomplish his promise. He ultimately does go, however, when his concern for the



Myrmidons changes to overwhelming rage.

The elaboration of this love story in comparison to the near exclusion of the Troilus-Criseyde story has led some critics to the conclusion that the poem was written before Chaucer's famous Troy romance; otherwise, the Laud poet would probably have capitalized on the reputation of the Troilus story by including it in his own work.<sup>6</sup> A poet so well-read in romance as the author of the Laud declares himself to be (15-24) would surely have read Chaucer's work and used the name Criseyde, rather Breseida. Since Lydgate's versions of the Troy tale includes a lengthy reference to Chaucer's work, the Laud poet would probably have done the same had he written after Chaucer.

Lumiansky, not wishing to speculate on what the Laud poet would or would not have done, attempts to explain the exclusion of the Troilus-Criseyde romance on thematic grounds.<sup>7</sup> He assumes that the poet's sole purpose is to create a Hector romance. Therefore, the introduction of the Troilus story when it normally appears in the tale would have undercut the interest in the heroism of Hector which the poet was attempting to create. An examination of the battle preceding the exchange of Antenor for Thoas reveals that the Laud poet has added several passages which presumably are his own since they do not appear in any other extant version, and they are important in emphasizing the deeds of Hector. But after examining the author's statements about his purpose, which includes equally the



deeds of Hector and an account of the war; and after investigating the dominant theme of the work, other conclusions about the Troilus-Criseyde story may be reached.

For example, the poet is highly concerned about motivating the individual encounters on the battlefield. He is, in fact, so concerned that, at times when there is no explanation to offer for an attack, Hector asks, "What eyles the? /Whi hastow thus smetyn me?" (7383-7384). This is not to say every attack in the poem is sufficiently motivated; but when a major character is involved, the poet attempts to offer explanations for the enmity, either in terms of emotions--envy, anger, or shame--or in terms of previous events--injuries, insults, or killings. When Achilles refuses to go to battle, the poet must develop sufficient enmity between two other characters so that the battle scenes can still be organized around vengeance. Instead of using the Troilus story to break the war encounters, the Laud poet inserts it into a battle scene to explain the motivation for the Troilus-Diomedes revenge motif. Whether the Laud poet knew Chaucer's work or not is irrelevant, especially considering that the Gest poet indicates that even at the time of his composition there was a well-known version of the Troilus story (8053-8054); thus, the Laud poet might have capitalized on that version had he been intent on examining the nature of love or relieving the war accounts with romance interludes. The story, as he actually handles it, effectively supports his

theme of revenge, conforms to his other explanations of motivation, and preserves his major focus on war.

The Achilles-Pollexena episode does not offer the same possibilities for relieving the monotony of the battle scenes that the Troilus story offers. Given the existing situation, no intimate romance scenes are possible between Achilles and Pollexena. Consequently, no romantic love interests comparable to those in the Troilus story are developed or even attempted. Furthermore, the ideals of courtly love are not introduced in the Laud: Jason marries Medea; Paris marries Helen; and Achilles asks for Pollexena in marriage. The point of interest for the Laud poet is not the nature of the love relationship itself, but the effect of love on man's actions in a situation of war.

Most of the elaborations that make the Laud distinct from other versions are not contained in the preliminary episodes of the Achilles-Pollexena affair; that is, aside from dramatizing, the poet follows closely the standard accounts of Achilles' feelings for Pollexena and of the message to Hecuba. Significant differences in content begin to appear when Achilles addresses the Greek leaders. His ideas echo those of the narrator. For example, his attempt to stop the war is in keeping with the narrator's sentiments:

I holde: he hadde gret synne  
That furst the were of hem by-gan,  
For he was bane of many a man. (12948-12950)

Later, Achilles pictures the agonies the Greeks have suffered in coming to Troy and concludes that a man is

foolish to trust his strength: "He is a fole that him ensures /In his strengthe & In his myght" (12296-12297). The narrator has earlier commented on the ineffectiveness of strength against death:

Wo is him that with the [death] wrasteles!  
 For sicurly he goth the with,  
 Or thow him brekes lym or lyth,  
 That he may not a-zeyn vp-rise  
 For myzt ne strengthe In no wyse;  
 For he schal dye In this world,--  
 So did this knyzt [Hector], that ze haue herd.  
 Be he neuere so strong ne bold,  
 He is for-zetten & nouzt of told,  
 When he is ded & hennes past;  
 In erthe is none that euere may last.  
 (11006-11016)

Achilles also argues that the Greeks can go home without shame because they have killed Hector (12331-12344), but the Greek leaders feel that raising the siege would be an act of cowardice (12355-12358). Through irony the narrator conveys similar ideas about cowardice:

Amonges hem alle was no coward,  
 Echon other to sle coueytes,  
 And alle men to sle waytes:  
 Many a man to grounde was feld;  
 But ther was non that euere him zeld,  
 Whil thei myght hold swerd In honde,  
 Or on her feet whil thei myzt stonde.  
 (12970-12976)

The passage indicates that the factors contributing to the continuation of the war are misconceived views of manhood and the fear of being charged with cowardice.

In a subsequent speech to Agamemnon's ambassadors, Achilles says it is "more honour /At Priamus to aske the pes, /Then be to-hewen as other wes" (13180-13182). The ambassadors return to Agamemnon and repeat the idea. The

narrator's many comments on the folly of the war and the senseless killing are obviously similar. Through repetition, the poet emphasizes the point that peace is the honorable and sensible way.

Achilles' change in character is the result of the power of love. During one of the battles Achilles asks a sergeant how the Greeks fare, and the sergeant's reply, an elaboration found only in the Laud, is that if Achilles will go to battle now, he will win lasting fame (12772-12776). But Achilles reasons to himself that it is better to lose fame than love (12815-12816). Here the poet attributes Achilles' new values to his desire to attain success in love (12813-12814). It is not strange then to find Achilles, who unheroically killed Hector, suddenly the champion of idealistic and virtuous goals. In his abstinence from battle and his interactions with his colleagues he has shown the change love is capable of working. In his speeches he acknowledges that shame, cowardice, honor, and fame are unworthy motivations to war, ideas all consonant with the narrator's ideas.

In war, however, numerous allegiances pull at a man. Many of the elaborations occurring late in the episode show Achilles being torn between his love for Pollexena and his love for the Myrmidons. The first of these elaborations occurs when he sends his men into battle alone. He calls the Myrmidons to him, charges them to fight for Agamemnon, and gives them a new ensign. The narrator describes

Achilles at their departure: "Achilles weped an hundred teres /At her wendyng vpon his leres" (13651-13652). After the Myrmidons return from battle and Achilles has counted them, the Laud poet inserts a passage stressing Achilles' divided loyalties:

He seyde: 'alas, that I was bounden  
In womannes loue & womannes bounde!'  
Whan so many were ded founde,  
He siked sore for hem & drouped.  
Ful litel mete that nyght he souped,  
To his bed Achilles went --  
With carful herte & gret torment:  
He wolde him-self hadde ben ded,  
He wist neuere what was his red,  
Whether he myght to batayle wende  
To venge his men or eke his frende,  
Or he scholde zit abyde  
To wete wat grace myzt be-tyde. (13868-13880)

The passage continues for thirty more lines, indicating Achilles' sleeplessness and his decisions now to "venge" his men and now to keep his promise. The elaboration focuses on Achilles' anguish and indecision, and the two forces pulling at him are clearly drawn as love and vengeance.

His decision to go to battle, of course, comes only when Troilus, leading the Trojans, is about to overrun the Greek camp. The Laud poet modifies the situation by focusing on Achilles' reaction. He is described as "wod" (14191), "a man mad" (14191), "a lyoun ramping forth" (14197), and "a deuyl of helle" (14223). He grows so angry that he forgets Pollexena:

He was so ful of tene & ire  
That he bad fecche his atire;  
He for-zate ther Pollexene  
And al that he be-het the owene. (14183-14186)

Thus, no rational decision to return to battle is ever made; Achilles simply rushes off in a fit of anger. Vengeance, prompted by his anger, ultimately overcomes his love. In the Laud the Achilles-Pollexena love affair disparages ideas of honor, manhood, and fame as motivations to war, shows the relative power of love and vengeance in a war situation, and introduces a new revenge motif-- Achilles vs. Hecuba.

The story of Achilles and Pollexena is a tale of love ruined by the circumstances of war. The only other love episode of any length in the Laud is the story of Jason and Medea, which occurs at the opening of the narrative before the war ever begins. Hinton finds this episode extraneous, included only because the poet wanted to render a full translation of his source.<sup>8</sup> But a close analysis of the episode and its relationship to the larger structure reveals that it is an integral part of the overall theme.

The Laud poet's treatment of Medea differs from that in most versions. In the Gest she is presented as a necromancer famed for powers over heaven and earth, a fame the poet decries because these powers belong only to God (403-430). Before the lovers pass into Medea's chamber, the Gest poet moralizes on the outcome of this relationship: Jason is false and all Medea's feigned powers of foresight are worthless (714-747). Thus, the reader is specifically reminded of the unhappy outcome of the love affair and of the falseness of both parties.



In Lydgate, Medea is again characterized as a sorceress, and a lengthy antifeminist passage follows her introduction into the tale; women are changeable, untrustworthy, inconstant, lustful, and false (1593-1800, 1823-1948). Two passages also portray Jason's deceitfulness and the outcome of the relationship (2072-2108, 2868-2935). Both the Gest poet and Lydgate agree on the fated nature of this romance and the lovers involved. They specifically relate the beginning of the love affair as somewhat unsavory, a fit prelude to the outcome.

The Laud poet explains Medea's powers, but makes no judgment on them as false or evil; in fact, they are presented in much the same vein that he presents other exotic elements in the Troy story: the Archer who is half man, half horse, the embalming of Hector, the background of the Amazons, and the eagle removing the sacrifice from the temple to the Greek ships. No mention is made of Jason's guile or of the ultimate outcome of the relationship. Since the lovers return safely to Jason's home and are never mentioned again, the poet presents a love story entire in its recitation. The story becomes, then, a contrast to the Achilles-Pollexena story. With Jason and Medea the affair takes place in peacetime; no atrocities have been committed by one member against the other's family; the lovers can arrange to see each other; promises are kept by both parties; and a satisfactory relationship is established.



Contrast is a method used often by the Laud poet: Hector's openness with Achilles' covertness; Achilles' behavior in love with his behavior in war; and the attitudes and actions of men during the truces with their attitudes and actions during battle. If the only reason for including Jason's quest for the golden fleece is to show how Lamedon offended the Greeks, then there is no apparent necessity for including the particulars of the Jason-Medea romance. Yet the Laud poet includes this material in a fairly lengthy form, when he excludes other similar material: the Troilus-Criseyde story and the romantic exchanges between Helen and Paris. In addition, the Laud poet handles the love story in a markedly different manner from other poets, making it a complete episode and giving no hint of its connections with evil. These facts suggest that the poet was consciously attempting to reshape the episode to make it consistent with his aims for the overall structure. A comparison of the two love episodes shows that each is concerned with the power of love in overcoming the obstacles of a specific situation. The comparison intensifies the revenge theme by showing how the wartime impulse to revenge eclipses the normally powerful impulse to romantic love. Romeo and Juliet is, of course, the most important Renaissance play juxtaposing love and revenge. Like the Laud poet, Shakespeare portrays vengeance as a force strong enough to obliterate the better intentions of man.

As the preceding discussion indicates, the Laud is structured so that every episode either elaborates or serves as a contrast to the idea of revenge. In the light of these findings, Dorothy Kempe's statement that the poet made all his changes "unconsciously and without definite artistic purpose"<sup>9</sup> is now questionable. The poet covers many aspects of revenge: the two kinds, the motivations causing it, the circumstances from which it arises, the element of madness, and the power it has as compared to other forces driving men. Nearly all of these aspects are also present in the Renaissance revenge tragedies. The similarities spring not, of course, from the Laud's impact as a source of the plays, but simply from the nucleus of ideas which surrounded the subject of revenge, a nucleus which was evidently present in the middle ages as well as in the Renaissance. The Laud brings many of these ideas together in a narrative form that stresses motivation and direct discourse; thus it can be seen as a transitional piece which moves the theme of revenge toward its familiar Renaissance form.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Fredson Bowers, Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 1587-1642 (Princeton, 1940).

<sup>2</sup>Mary Bonaventure Mroz, Divine Vengeance: Philosophical Backgrounds of the Revenge Motif in Shakespeare's Chronicle History Plays (Washington, D.C., 1941).

<sup>3</sup>William Matthews, The Tragedy of Arthur (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1960).

<sup>4</sup>Larry A. Benson, "The Alliterative Morte Arthure and Medieval Tragedy," TSL, XI (1965), 81.

<sup>5</sup>G. Hofstrand, The Seege of Troye: A Study in the Intertextual Relations of the Middle English Romance the Seege or Batayle of Troye (Lund, 1936), 186-187.

<sup>6</sup>Dorothy Kempe, "A Middle English Tale of Troy," Englische Studien, XXIX (1901), 5.

<sup>7</sup>R.M. Lumiansky, "The Story of Troilus and Briseida in the Laud Troy Book," MLQ, XVII (1956), 238-239.

<sup>8</sup>N.D. Hinton, "A Study of the Middle English Poems Relating to the Destruction of Troy," Diss. Univ. of Wisconsin, 1957, p. 194.

<sup>9</sup>Kempe, p. 22.

#### IV. CHARACTERIZATION AND THEME

Three characters--Hector, Achilles, and Pirrus--become more significant in the Laud than in the other English versions. Material is added concerning Hector's character, making him primarily a virtuous pagan; Achilles' character, making him a sighing lover who at last sees the war as inane; and Pirrus' character, making him the ultimate avenger. The three are successively the strong men in the poem, but their characterizations range from virtue in Hector to vengeance in Pirrus. Such a degenerative movement reflects the narrator's view of time: the world is moving away from the golden age to degeneracy and destruction. Revenge plays a significant role in this movement because it is through the unprincipled methods of revenge that the virtuous characters are slain. The revenge tragedies also carry a note of pessimism about the future, particularly since the protagonists like Hieronimo, Hamlet, and Romeo and Juliet die in the process of overcoming the antagonists. In both the plays and the poem the effect of revenge on the future is the same.

The Laud is usually described as a Hector romance and the poetic elaborations indicate that Hector is the

central figure early in the war. An individual characterization is developed which focuses on the hero's prowess in battle and his virtue. The central passage on Hector is a simple declaration by the narrator attesting to both qualities:

Glorious kyng lord Ihesu!  
 Who-so hadde sen Ector vertu,  
 How he the Gregeis ther reuerced,  
 Helmes and hauberk how he persed,  
 How he hem sclow by two and on,--  
 He wolde haue sworn by Peter and Ion,  
 By Marie bryzt and persones thre:  
 That god that is In vnite  
 Made neuere man that was so goode,  
 Ne so many schedde of mannes blode,  
 Ne non so strong as Ector was.  
 By him myzt no man pas,  
 That he myzt take or hent,  
 That the lyff a-way ne went. (7413-7426)

Although the passage does not Christianize Hector, it indicates that from a Christian point of view--that is, from the point of view of one who swears by Peter, John, Mary, and the Trinity--Hector was one of the best and strongest men who ever lived.

The narrator reiterates this idea in another place, but expresses it in terms of comparison:

I trowe, god made neuere suche a knyzt,  
 Ne zaf neuere man suche a myzt,  
 That euere was borne In toun or port,  
 But it were only to Sampson fort,  
 For he (was) seker with-oute pere  
 Off alle the men that euere were.  
 Off Sampson hadde ben ther that tyde  
 And al that day hadde reden him be-syde,  
 He ne myzt haue don no more then he  
 For al his myzt and his pouste.  
 Red I neuere of knyzt ne man,  
 That born was of womman,  
 That dede the dedis that Ector did;  
 Alas, that euere him mys-be-tid! (6721-6734)

Sampson, the virtuous Old Testament strong man, is compared to Hector, the virtuous pagan strong man. At another time the narrator indulges in exaggeration to show Hector's supernatural strength:

Who may with-sonde suche An enemy?  
 It was neuere man zaff suche strokes;  
 Off a man were made of okes,  
 Off Marbil gray and grete stones,  
 And yren and stele were alle his bones,  
 He wolde hem al to-cleue--  
 By him that made Adam and Eue! (6384-6390)

The key passages on Hector's character, then, are spoken by the narrator, and the recitation of the action supports the narrator's declarations. A short catalog is often employed to demonstrate Hector's skill in battle:

Ector was be-fore al-weyes,  
 He belan neuere to scle the Gregeis,  
 He cleues hem, and thorow strikes,  
 And throwes hem In clyf and dikes,  
 He makes here hedes naked and bare,  
 The bodyes cleue In-to the schare,  
 He drow here scheldes fro here nekkes,  
 Ther aketons ferd as toren sekkes;  
 Off his scheld made he present  
 To alle that wolde zeue strok or hent;  
 His sword was wel with alle a-kuoynt  
 With kyng, and duke, and prince anynt. (6511-6522)

Other passages employ hyperbole, simile, and the attitude of the people about him to establish characteristics of skill and courage. Often these passages end with statements of his unearthly or superhuman power:

Ector rides & raykes a-boute,  
 Off no man hadde he no doute,  
 Off no mannes pride he ne thouzte,  
 Off no mannes leuyng told he nouzt,  
 ...  
 He fauzt euere-more In one,  
 He leues stondyng be-fore him none,  
 He is to hem an euell gest,

He fightes euere with-outen rest:  
 He sclow two thousand, er he be-lan;  
 Thei seyde he was non erthely man. (10885-10896)

But in other situations, like his fight with Episcropus and Cedius, Hector asserts his own nobility:

Saide Ector, 'I was neuere thral,  
 I am fre, and my kynde al;  
 In al my kyn is no throle,  
 But kyng and duk, knyzt & erle;  
 My ffader is a gentil kyng,  
 Suche is non In thyn ospreyng!  
 Fyfftene kynges, genteler than thow,  
 Doth him omage and fewte now;  
 And I, his sone, knyzt, and Air,  
 Vndir me is man and mair,  
 Duke and Prince, and knyzt strong,  
 And alle that euere to him long.  
 My moder is a gentil quene,  
 A trewe lady, and euere hath bene;  
 Sche did her lord neuere falshede,  
 But euere was trewe In word and dede.  
 It semes wel thanne, that I am fre,  
 I may be skyl no cherl be! (7455-7472)

This passage is almost in the tradition of the epic hero's boast, appearing somewhat out of place in the speech of a good knight, but presumably Hector meant to defend his family rather than prove his own superiority. On the point of modesty, however, Hector can hardly be compared to Gawain.

Perhaps the most artistic of all the elaborations concerning Hector's strength and skill is the speech given to Agamemnon after the hero's death:

It is to vs wel more a-vauntage  
 That he is ded & loken In cage,  
 Then we hadde sclayn In fight felle  
 Halff the men that with him dwelle.  
 For he sclow mo him-selff alone  
 Then alle that other did euerychone,  
 And we be now--I vnderstande--  
 Mo then sixti hundred thousande  
 Off Mennes bodies gode and able,  
 That ben a-pert and defendable. (11355-11364)



The next forty lines constitute an impressive catalog, naming the most prominent men Hector killed. By giving this testimony of Hector's strength to the leader of the Greeks, the poet creates the illusion that everyone involved in the war--Trojan and Greek alike--agrees that Hector was the strongest man there.

The poet establishes Hector's prowess through the narrator's assertions, through Hector's deeds on the battlefield and his own assertions about himself, and through Agamemnon's eulogy. On the other hand, the poet establishes the hero's goodness largely through descriptive techniques. As the two central passages indicate, the author associates Christian characteristics with Hector. He supports this association through the use of Christian terminology. When Hector is wounded, he does his "penuance" (9445), and before he rides to battle, his father blesses him (4877-4884; 9781).

The author also associates Hector with Christianity through descriptions of the hero's environment. The hall of Ilion, where Hector recovers from his wounds, has a marvelous, supernatural quality. All the parts are covered with gold, and the walls are set with precious stone, particularly with carbuncle stones that shine as bright as day even at midnight (9465-9480). The hall is supported by twelve magnificent alabaster columns:

On stones twelue was hit al set  
Off Alabaster that wele were wrou3t,

It was gret meruayle how thei were bouzt  
 Vnto that werk to rayse that ground,  
 It was meruayle where men thei found. (9484-9488)

The floor is made of crystal, and in the corners are images so life-like they are often mistaken for living people (9491-9503). The towers reach above the clouds (9511-9518), and outside the door is a golden tree whose gold and silver branches bear every kind of fruit in the world, but the fruit, too, is made of gold and silver (9529-9540). The hall itself contains a great gold image of Jupiter that anyone might come and worship when he pleases (9545-9568). The poet relies on Dares as his authority for the existence of these marvels (9504-9506), but at the same time stresses the incredibility of the hall:

If thow wolt that hall discryue,  
 Sicurly ze wolde not leue  
 The wonder werk of the Pyleres;  
 Man wolde holde hem grete lyeres,  
 Man wolde wene that men did lye,  
 And holde it alle for fairie.  
 But man wolde wene In his thoght,  
 That suche werk myght neuere be wroght.  
 (9453-9460)

Far from being evil, however, Ilion is associated with a virtue and glory that no longer exist:

For now is non so glorious,  
 Ne non In this world so vertuous,  
 As Ilion was the while it stode. (9461-9463)

These descriptions do not Christianize Hector, as the image of Jupiter indicates. The poet attempts only to make the hero virtuous by associating him with virtue: the "vertuous" and marvelous hall of Ilion, the virtuous Sampson, and various Christian figures--Mary, John, and Peter.

After Hector's death, Priam attempts to sanctify the body. He frees it temporarily from odor and decay, preserving it with all its life-like qualities in a cage in the temple of Apollo, where the citizenry might view it (11208-11290). The tabernacle is set before the altar and the four golden pillars which support it have images that resemble angels. The walls, roof, and steps of the tabernacle are nearly as sumptuous as those of the hall of Ilion. Four mortars that can be quenched by no substance on earth burn day and night around the tomb. This treatment of the corpse represents a kind of consecration, but definitely not a Christian consecration since the tabernacle is set before the altar of Apollo. Nevertheless, the body is treated with more reverence and honor than that of any other Trojan or Greek including Troilus, Paris, and Achilles.

Virtue, marvelousness, and sanctification are elements often connected with saints' legends. While the poet does not make Hector a saint, he apparently borrows techniques from those legends to build the characterization. Dorothy Everett indicates that saints' lives and romances have distinctly different ends, but that they often use the same motifs.<sup>1</sup> Ojars Kratins also finds parallels between Amis and Amiloun and the saints' lives: leprosy, poverty, child sacrifice, and revitalization are motifs borrowed from the saints' lives and applied to the heroes of the romance, Amis and Amiloun, to make them pious,

though not saints.<sup>2</sup> This technique for building characterization is evidently not unusual in medieval literature.

The preceding comparisons with the Gest indicate that the Laud poet expands both the description of Ilion and the embalming of Hector. The marvelous and exotic is a standard element of romance, but the other English versions of Troy, following Guido's history, condemn the marvellous. For example, Lydgate says, "Yit God forbede we schulde 3if credence" to Medea's powers (I, 1711), and the Gest poet devotes 299 lines to explaining how the sun and moon did not spring from the soil of Delos island (4264-4464). The Laud poet, however, specifically relates the marvellous nature of Ilion to virtue and glory. This relationship, since it differs from other versions of Troy, may indicate that the poet is using techniques of comparison similar to those found by Everett and Kratins. Since he makes explicit use of comparisons in other places to build character, it is possible he borrowed elements from religious literature to give his hero a virtuous, though non-Christian, characterization. The poet thus establishes both virtue and prowess in one character.

The character of Achilles shows a three part development. Before the death of Hector, the poet's elaborations in Achilles' characterization are aimed at creating a foil to the Trojan hero. From the time he sees Pollexena (11987) until he returns to battle (14157), Achilles the

lover is emphasized. From the time he returns to battle (14157) until just before his death (15408), he becomes again the treacherous strong man, foil this time to Troilus and Mennon. As the progression suggests, the characterization fluctuates: Achilles is at one time the treacherous and vengeful enemy and, at another, the distraught, but well-intentioned lover. Both roles are functionally important to the revenge motif. The one indicates how war may breed unchivalric behavior, and the other demonstrates the relationship between romantic love and revenge. The following discussion attempts to show the differences in development, and something of the overall effect of this dichotomous, though perhaps not inconsistent, characterization.

For most of the first 1,100 lines, Achilles is simply the strong, but treacherous Greek adversary for Hector. The poet's early elaborations emphasize his strength in battle:

The furst batayle sir Achilles  
 To lede that day for-sothe ches;  
 Out of his tent he is now yssed,  
 To kyng Hupoun was he wel wyssed,  
 A douzti knyzt of gret a-fere;  
 But him thoght euel that he come there:  
 Hupoun was michel and long,  
 Hey and brod, mechel & strong,  
 He was mechel as a geaunt;  
 But him hadde ben better to haue ben at Gaunt  
 Or haue leyn seke in his bed,  
 Then he that day batayle hadde led.  
 Achilles smot him with a spere,  
 That al his Armes gan to-tere,  
 He smot him thorow bothe flesch & bone  
 And thorow his armes euerychone;  
 Thoow he were mechel and long,  
 Out of his sadel he him sclong. (7359-7376)

Hupon is a fearful adversary here, the word "michel" being used three times for him, and yet the contest was ridiculous since Achilles won easily.

The Greek hero's strength, however, is clearly second to Hector's:

Achilles then, that lordly sire,  
 Wolde not abide him[Hector] In his Ire,  
 But euere (held) fro him alone,  
 Euere til Ector were gone.  
 Hadde he a-biden him In his wratthe,  
 He scholde haue had an euel batthe,  
 He scholde haue bathed In his blode. (10573-10579)

At no time is Achilles' strength ever related to virtue or compared to that of Sampson's. In fact, quite opposite descriptions are given of Achilles:

Achilles come thenne ffast ridande  
 As a deucl with foule semblande,  
 With alle the knyghtes that he ledde. (8795-8797)

Thus, the poet through short descriptions creates a strong man and formidable enemy, yet the antithesis of Hector.

Achilles' treachery and cowardice are emphasized in his many attempts to kill Hector through guile:

Achilles holdes him euere asyde,  
 He maketh him redi to wayte his tyde;  
 As ffische is dreven to the bayte,  
 So waytes he him at som defaute;  
 T(h)er-vpon he euere duelles,  
 For he atentis to no-thing elles,  
 For whan he may his tyme se  
 Opon Ector venged to be. (6527-6534)

This passage is intensified by its position in the text. It occurs in the middle of a long account of Hector's heroic actions in battle.

Achilles' treacherous and vengeful nature is

emphasized in later episodes, especially those against Troilus:

For tene his herte wex grete,  
That Troyle did him the vilony;  
He hadde to him gret envy,  
He swore by god that dwelled In heuene  
He scholde him sle for odde or euene.  
(14620-14624)

When the Myrmidons surround Troilus, Achilles is glad:  
"Achilles--lord! that he was glad! /Off alle the world  
no more he bad!" (14859-14860). During one of his  
recuperations, the Greek hero spends his time thinking  
how he will slay Trojans:

Achilles thinkes day & nyghtis,  
How he may sle douȝti knyȝtis;  
He nolde it lette for non auzt  
That any man him zeue mauȝt. (14641-14644)

The poet adequately shows Achilles' villainy, but through the entire portrait he is little more than evil foil to the virtuous Hector and subsequently to Troilus and Mennon. For this particular aspect of Achilles' character, the poet makes only sporadic expansion of traits already suggested by other medieval versions of the story, while with the character of Hector, he expands at nearly every opportunity and develops some lengthy passages which are completely independent of other versions. Because the poet relies on simile and plot action rather than didacticisms to establish Achilles' characterization, the Laud is perhaps slightly superior to versions like the Gest, which makes a blatant statement of Achilles' unchivalric behavior and berates Homer for praising him (10312-10362).



Because the poet attempts to keep Achilles, the formidable enemy, before the reader, he must give a running account of Achilles' activities. Consequently, many short passages on the Greek hero appear in the Laud which are not contained in the Gest. He thinks in battle (6617-6620; 10779-10810); he keeps out of Hector's way (6527-6530; 10573-10579); he plots with others to kill Hector (6391-6396; 10764-10770); and he reacts to a death (10841-10842). When he is wounded, short commentaries on his condition are inserted (11291-11306; 14605-14619), and transition passages such as "Now of Ector lete we be, /And of Achilles speke we" (11291-11292) are not uncommon. Frequently the Greeks entertain their wounded hero and bring him expert physicians:

Lord, the Ioye that Gregeis made!  
 Thei ete & drank & made him glade  
 With pipes & daunces & Iolyffte;  
 Gret Ioye it was her murthe to se.  
 Achilles thei dede alle glade,  
 Mechel murthe thei him made,  
 And dight him gode fisiciens,  
 With leche-crafft thes surgiens;  
 Alle the helpe that thei myght  
 Thei it dede by day & nyght.  
 And thonked here godis In that place  
 That hadde sent hem som grace,  
 To scle him that hadde hem most anoyed  
 And her Gregeis so foule distroied.  
 (10973-10986)

These elaborations expand Achilles' role, but sometimes do little to further his characterization. They serve primarily to draw attention to the character so that, although he is not the central figure in the poem, he is still before the reader as a representation of Greek

power and the Trojans' chief enemy.

All these passages on Achilles show no unique method of character development. There are no central passages spoken by the narrator indicating the precise nature of Achilles' character. In fact, Priam's speech when he finds that Achilles has broken his oath to make the Greeks withdraw is one of the few explicit judgments of Achilles in the Laud:

But he is fals & euel thynkand  
And doth alle thyng with gylerye,  
With no manhed ne chyualrie. (14336-14338)

There are no catalogs of his deeds in battle, no recurrent exaggerations, and no elaborate associations comparable to the associations of Hector with saintliness and virtue. The passages simply describe his actions, have no unique development, and are, therefore, largely undifferentiated from other descriptions in the poem.

Achilles' role as distraught lover, however, shows definite development through dramatization. The point of the characterization is to show how the situation produces an inner conflict by forcing the character to choose between two allegiances. The Laud poet presents the conflict through Achilles' interactions with those around him and through soliloquies which describe his inner condition.

Achilles' conflicting encounters with others begin in the councils he calls to persuade the Greeks to go home. Additions to these council scenes were discussed in the

preceding chapter. Their importance for Achilles' characterization lies in the fact that his views on war become consonant with the narrator's, a fact which stimulates the reader's sympathy for him.

The Laud poet demonstrates Achilles' determination to abstain from the war through a melodramatic scene with Heber. Achilles, of course, refuses to fight because he has promised Hecuba he will get the Greeks to raise the siege. Heber, mortally wounded, rushes to Achilles' tent to berate him for not assisting the Greeks. The Gest reports the content of the speech:

He chalinget Achilles with a chere fell,  
 Reproued hym prudly of his proud wille,  
 þat lurket in his loge, list not to helpe,  
 And segh his folke so fallyn, & in fight end,  
 þat with his monhede so mykell, & with his mayn strenght,  
 Might soucour his Soudiours, & saue hom alyue.  
 (9544-9549)

The Laud poet dramatizes the encounter by presenting direct discourse:

And thow myght saue hem [Greeks] fro this wo  
 Iff thow wolde to fight go,  
 With thi strengthe & thi myght,  
 Iff thow hadde ben to-day at fight.  
 Hit comes the of cruel wil,  
 That thow schalt holde the thus stil  
 And wol not helpe thi contre-men,  
 Thow hast lorn of hem M ten.

...

How myght thow--he sayde--In herte fynde  
 To thi peple be so vn-kynde,  
 And wolde not haue of hem mercy?  
 It is so sothe thi vilony!  
 Men wol say upon the tresoun,  
 Sithen thow leuest with-oute resoun. (12711-12726)

The Gest then indicates that the "trunchyn" was pulled out and "the buerne deghet" (9550-9551). The Laud poet

also reports that the spear was removed, but then adds:  
 "He died by-fore Achilles eyene /With mochel wo & mychel  
 pyne" (12731-12732). The Gest records the encounter  
 between Achilles and Heber as one more event in the tale  
 of Troy, but in the Laud the encounter becomes a melo-  
 dramatic test of Achilles' determination to abstain.

Again, to show that Achilles means to abstain, the  
Laud poet expands an encounter with a servant returning  
 from battle. In a speech that, aside from some points of  
 grammar and perhaps meter, might have come out of a  
 Renaissance play, Achilles asks:

...what tydandes?  
 How done the Gregeis, by thi fayth?  
 What was that noyse that was so layth?  
 Is any lord of oures sclayn?  
 Loke the sothe thow not layn! (12742-12746)

The servant then reports the events of the battle--some  
 ships have been burned; many men are dead; some have fled;  
 and Palamydes was killed by Paris in revenge for Dephebus'  
 death. He humbly suggests that Achilles might return to  
 battle, and even volunteers to show him the way. He  
 concludes with flattery and an appeal to the lasting fame  
 Achilles would receive were he to return to battle. The  
Gest contains no question by Achilles, and the servant's  
 speech is limited to only sixteen lines as compared to  
 fifty-one in the Laud. Consequently, much of the dramatic  
 and persuasive quality of the Laud is lacking in the Gest.

The episode in which Achilles counts the Myrmidons  
 after their return to battle is nearly twice as long in

the Laud (13851-13908) as it is in the Gest (10086-10115), and is aimed primarily at showing Achilles' love for his men. The major elaboration lies in the narrator's description of the hero's frustration: first he thinks he will avenge his men; then he decides to keep his oath to Hecuba. Although direct discourse is at a minimum here-- Achilles delivers only one short speech lamenting his condition (13867-13868)--the passage still gives the illusion of dramatization because it describes Achilles' fluctuating thoughts.

Hamlet, of course, delivers several soliloquies which show his ambivalent loyalties; he should know definitely that Claudius murdered his father, yet he should act to fulfill his promise to his father's ghost. Like Hamlet, Hieronimo berates himself for waiting to know who sent the mysterious letter before he acts. Juliet, too, is torn between loyalties to her kinsman, Tybalt, and her husband, Romeo. Revenge plays often show the frustration of characters who have divided loyalties and in this way the poem and the plays are alike.

In a subsequent episode, the Gest poet reports that Achilles questions the Greeks who are fleeing the battlefield about conditions there. They reply in a brief eight lines that the Greek camp is about to be overrun (10113-10200). In the Laud the fugitives ride into camp crying that all is lost (14101-14106). Achilles asks, "How dooure kynges, and oure Gregeis? /How bere thei hem a-zeyn

the Frigais?" (14113-14114). The fugitives then paint the horrors of the battle and Achilles' impending doom:

And iff thai fynde the her-In  
 In zoure tent naked stondande,  
 Thei leue the not on lyue lyuande;  
 For al the gold of hethen Spayne  
 Leue ze not here vnsclayne,  
 For thei hate zow ouer alle thyng.  
 For Ector deth--by heuene kyng!--  
 That were, lord, her herte wil,  
 Might thei, lord, thi body spil. (14148-14156)

The speech is again aimed at dramatizing the incident and at persuading Achilles to return to battle.

In the Gest Achilles rides immediately to battle (10201-10205), but in the Laud a dialogue between the fugitives and Achilles ensues:

Achilles seyde on that wolde...  
 'Is ouzt Troyle In that place,  
 That makes oure men thus to chase?'  
 He sayde: 'lord, ther he is,  
 And alle oure men he dos amys;  
 For his wodnesse & his deray  
 Alle oure men ben fled a-way;  
 For he is so strong In his myght,  
 Ther may non a-byde him In fight.'  
 'Alas!' he seyde, 'that euere Moder me bar!  
 Whi ne were I right now thar?  
 Alas that euere me Moder bounde  
 Or euere In cradel me be-wounde!  
 That I scholde for a wommanes sake  
 Let my enemys suche murther make  
 Off my Men and of my kyn,  
 And do ther-of no medicyn!' (14165-14182)

The Laud poet creates a dramatic situation which ultimately conveys the character's frustration.

The final expansion of Achilles' character as lover consists primarily of a dialogue between the Greek hero and Archilogus, a friend who will accompany him to Troy where he will marry Pollexena. The Gest poet simply writes:

Achilles with Archilagon chefe on þe way,  
 The noble sun and next heire of Nestor the Duke,  
 Soghtyn to the citie somyn onon,  
 And to Appollyns aune temple angardly yode.  
 (10535-10538)

In the Leud, the narrator describes Achilles' joy, and then Achilles himself describes his feelings in a lengthy speech to Archilogus (15337-15356).

This examination of Achilles as distraught lover indicates that the poet worked primarily with dramatic devices to make the character's inner conflict overt, first delineating his determination to abstain and then portraying his love for his men. In the process of depicting Achilles' dilemma, however, the poet generates sympathy for the character who in the first 1,100 lines is treacherous and vengeful. Because of this sympathy the narrator's attack on Hecuba (15439-15452) seems justified despite the fact that Achilles killed Hector through similarly unscrupulous methods. This dual characterization is not necessarily inconsistent because the plan to marry Pollexena involves treachery to the Greeks, but it still does not leave the audience with any clear-cut opinion of Achilles. On the one hand, he is evil, and on the other, he is to be pitied for his dilemma. The ambiguity involved here is to some extent the product of the author's attempt to accomplish two different ends through one character; but a part of the ambiguity can also be attributed to the author's attempt to create a character who is not nearly as good as Hector, but who is not completely undesirable either.



The character of Pirrus shows still another thematic effect and another method of development. Dorothy Kempe notes that the whole episode of Pirrus may be an attempt to create an independent tale.<sup>3</sup> Compared to the Gest and Guido's work, the Laud does contain a completely new narrative. It begins with Menelaus' visit to Lycomedes. The Gest simply reports:

...Menelay the mene tyme hade the mere past  
To Lycomede, þe lell kyng, & the lede broght,--  
Neptolon the noble, next to Achilles. (10924-10926)

In the Laud, however, Menelaus sets sail, lands, and rides on to Lycomedes' hall (16453-16473). The conversation between the two men is then recorded. Lycomedes greets the visitors, but Menelaus unceremoniously attacks the host for not sending Pirrus to battle:

Hit is, sir kyng, a vylonye  
To the, sir, and to him bothe,  
The kynges of Grece with the are wrothe;  
And thow him holdis as brid In cage,  
That he wynnes him no vasselage,  
But leses his time & his loos,  
And helpis hem not azeyn here foos,  
As him by skyl auzt for to do. (16500-16507)

Lycomedes reacts angrily, vowing there was no way to send the boy before. He then addresses Pirrus: "Child Pirrus, I the be-teche /Thi fader deth to gete wreche" (16519-16520). Thus, Pirrus is charged, before he even enters the war, with the duty of avenging his father's death.

The ensuing episode recounts Menelaus' return with his charge and the subsequent knightng of Pirrus. The

Laud poet expands the knighting ceremony, emphasizing the riches of Achilles that now become his son's and including a speech by Ajax-Thelamon as he girds the sword on Pirrus. This whole preliminary account of Pirrus' entry into the war is expanded through techniques of dramatization and is aimed at emphasizing the boy's heritage and his duty to avenge his father.

Pirrus' role in the ensuing battle is expanded to establish his prowess, but even this skill is related to his father:

Pirrus prikes aboute & praunses,  
 Fro man to man aboute he launses  
 Al his strengthe for to assay,  
 He dud gret harm on hem that day;  
 His fader Armes that day he bare. (16687-16691)

His first battle not only proves his prowess, but also begins the enmity between him and Penthesilea, who declares all men of gentle blood ought to avenge Hector's death (16844-16845). Her speech is expanded to emphasize her desire for revenge and her insult to Achilles, an insult which provides motivation for the bloody revenge Pirrus takes on her in a subsequent battle.

The Laud poet also adds details to the slaying of Penthesilea which emphasize the atrocity of the act. First of all, instead of the Myrmidons only breaking her helmet strap and baring her head (Gest, 11101-11102), in the Laud they wound her so that Pirrus attacks an already wounded fighter. Then, in the actual murder, Pirrus is not content with killing her by cutting off her arm (Gest, 11111-11117),

he continues, even after killing her, to chop at the body:

And Pirrus In his greuauunce  
Toke on hir a foule vengauunce,  
For he lefft not of hir a spot  
That he ne hit hewe as flesch to pot.  
(17135-17138)

By killing their leadership, Pirrus annihilates the Trojan defense and commits the first of the unchivalric murders designed to avenge his father.

During the night of slaughter in Troy, Pirrus leads the attack on the castle:

Alle that thei fond down thei sclow  
With-oute mercy, with sorwe y-now;  
Many a curtais ladi swete  
In that Palais to dethe thai bete  
That comen were of hye lynage,  
Off kynges blod In mariage;  
Thei lefft nother lowe ne hye. (18283-18289)

His mercilessness extends even to the king:

Pirrus soght afttir the kyng,  
Fro hous to hous, In his byggyng;  
And afttir that to the temple he ran,  
And ther fond he that carful man:  
Pirrus tho was glad y-now,  
His swerd sone out he drow  
And al to-hewe him euery bone,  
Ryght be-fore the auter-stone,  
That al the Auter was al by-bled  
With his blod that ther was sched. (18293-18302)

Once again Pirrus is satisfied only after he has desecrated the enemy's corpse. The Gest mentions neither of the desecrations nor the sacking of the castle. In this case, the Laud poet's additions are designed to strengthen the abhorrent nature of Pirrus' revenge.

In his final appearance in the Laud, Pirrus slays Pollexena, chops up the body, and washes his father's

monument with her blood. This episode is common to a number of medieval versions of Troy, but the Laud poet intensifies Pirrus' malice by giving Pollexena a speech in which she declares her innocence and indicates that she never wanted Achilles' death (18547-18566). She concludes her speech heroically:

For me is leuere In my contre  
 Be sclayn In my virginite,  
 That I falle not In 3oure handis,  
 pan go with 3ow In-to 3oure landis  
 And be ther defouled & for-layn  
 With 3ow that haue my fader sclayn.  
 Lette come the deth when ze wille,  
 For I am redi now ther-tille" (18559-18566)

The Gest poet includes a speech similar to this one, and he also indicates elsewhere that Pollexena is probably innocent; but the Laud poet intensifies the scene by including both points in one speech delivered by the lady herself.

The expanded material in Pirrus' character represents a unique innovation because it introduces into the story a new tale: a son is charged with the duty of avenging his father's death, and he ends by cruelly slaughtering both the innocent and the guilty. The expanded material also demonstrates the intensification of revenge as it is taken up by the succeeding generation. While Achilles is at times treacherously vengeful, his love for Pollexena, to some extent, redeems his characterization. Pirrus' character, however, has no brighter side. He is so thoroughly immersed in his duty to his father that even death does

not satisfy him; he must also destroy the corpses.

This tradition of Pirrus as a figure of revenge comes down to the Renaissance and is used by Shakespeare in Hamlet as the model for Hamlet's revenge (II, ii, 471-541). In analyzing this passage in Hamlet, Harold Skulsky calls Pirrus the "archetypal avenger,"<sup>4</sup> and indicates that the tradition comes from Virgil. But the Laud also depicts Pirrus wildly searching for the king, an action which does not occur in any of the other three English versions. The Gest indicates, however, that prose versions of Pirrus' revenge were popular (10928). Thus, Shakespeare need not necessarily have recalled the Virgilian version. His association of Hamlet in the revenge tragedy with Pirrus in the Troy story indicates that by the time of the Renaissance the tale had become associated with revenge and that the figure of Pirrus was well-known as the extreme model of vengeance. The Laud, whether it was a direct influence or not, must be considered an early forerunner of that association.

The preceding analysis of the characterization in the Laud indicates that the poet develops his characters by several devices: the creation of completely new episodes, commentaries by the narrator, comparisons, exaggerations, associations, and dramatization. Despite these techniques, however, the characters are not singular or enigmatic as, for example, Chaucer's Criseyde is. In

fact, Achilles is little more than the typical sighing medieval lover. It is in their respective relationships to the subject of revenge that the characters are significant. In the case of Hector, revenge destroys chivalry and virtue; in the case of Achilles, revenge successfully overcomes the fulfillment of romantic love; and in the case of Pirrus, the duty to revenge obliterates all humanitarian elements, primarily justice, respect for the human image, and mercy. Because the poet deals with the whole Trojan war, not an isolated episode, the characterizations of necessity are not individually developed; but Pirrus and Hector do emerge as effective, though one-dimensional, portraits.

As the characterizations of the strong men in the poem move from virtuous to thoroughly vengeful, so does the general tenor of the war. People become less and less merciful. A number of episodes early in the war indicate that both sides are willing to be merciful: Achilles spares King Theman because Thelaphus bets for the king's life (3983-4078). Hector grants Ajax-Thelamon's request to withdraw, though the Greeks could have been destroyed (5961-6002); the Trojan council saves Thoas from death (7064-7216); Hector saves Theseus because he gave the hero good advice (5457-5472); and Hector grants an unidentified Greek noble's request for life (10907-10908). Despite Hinton's statement that he can find nothing magnanimous in Hector's character,<sup>5</sup> the hero is generous enough to take this nobleman prisoner, but in doing so he is treacherously

slain by Achilles. The nobleman's plea to be saved is not included in the Gest (8649-8656), and in Lydgate's version Hector is unarmed because he is despoiling the body of a splendidly armoured Greek noble (III, 5332-5399). The Laud poet's interpretation contrasts Hector's merciful chivalry with Achilles' treachery.

As the story progresses, there are fewer and fewer instances of mercy. On the other hand, atrocities seem to increase: Achilles drags Troilus' body around the battlefield; Hecuba takes her revenge on Achilles; and Pollexena is sacrificed to the gods, despite her innocence. The Laud poet intensifies this movement in his descriptions of the general attitude held by the two armies and in his elaboration of specific events.

The general attitudes of both armies show more and more determination to win and less and less inclination to mercy. Late in the war, after Achilles unsuccessfully tries to stop the fighting, the narrator says:

When thei were comen, thei zede & souped,  
And many on for his frend drouped  
And for hem-selff thei seide 'alas'  
Thei wende neuere to passe that plas;  
And zit were thei so envious,  
So ful of Pride and meruelous,  
That hem was leuere echon to dye  
Than any of other mercy to crye. (12951-12958)

A few lines later, the narrator describes the end of a truce:

...thei most nede leue her play  
And bygynne azeyn the werre,  
For no man may ther-fro hem sterre;  
Vntil that on for ay & euere  
Be al for-done, thei blyn neuere. (14630-14634)



again, at the beginning of Penthesilea's second battle, the narrator describes the general encounter:

Thei ride to-gedir with gret randoun,  
 Euery man now hath of other envy;  
 Ther was a carful company,  
 When thei were to-gedre met:  
 Echon other al to-bet,  
 Sclow, & wounded, & thorow-bare;  
 Non of hem wolde other spare. (16426-16432)

Before the last battle the narrator again shows the determination of both armies to have the victory:

[They] ros a-zeyn when thei myght se,  
 For thei wol not lete it so be,  
 Vn-to that on were vndirlyng,  
 And that other lord & kyng. (16985-16988)

Penthesilea's change in attitude is a reflection in miniature of the general movement in the Laud from action directed by chivalric mercy to unrelenting vengeance. In her first battle encounter, Penthesilea simply takes equipment or freedom from the Greeks she overcomes: Menelaus loses his horse; Diomedes, his shield; Ajax-Thelamon, his freedom. But after Diomedes leads 10,000 men against Philomene, who is returning to Troy with the captive Ajax-Thelamon, Penthesilea swears an oath that "sche wolde scle that sche myght take" (16270).

The abandonment of chivalric principles of mercy begins with Hector's death which occurs while he is granting an act of mercy, and moves ultimately to the sack of Troy, which the narrator describes as totally devoid of mercy:

Mochel blod that nyght thei schedde,  
 It was no wonder of thei dredde,  
 To crye mercy was hem no bote,

Thooow thei fellen vnto here fote;  
 The cry was gret & fer herd  
 Of hem that thus to dethe ferd. (18223-18228)

If continued long enough, then, revenge leads to a relentless determination to win, even if all principles of knightly behavior and mercy must be sacrificed.

The total structure of the second destruction moves from chivalric to unchivalric behavior, and the change is brought about by men's propensity for revenge during war. This movement supports the narrator's conception of the decay of the world. Of Hector, he says:

In Troie was neuere so gode knyzt born,  
 As thei of Troie hadde than for-lorn!  
 A better knyzt of chialrie  
 Was neuere born In Asye!  
 Ne neuere was, ne neuere schal be  
 A better knyzt In armes than was he! (10993-10998)

The same is true of the city of Troy:

Alas! noble Troye, thow schalt be spilled,  
 ...  
 Alas! thi chambres & thi boures,  
 Thi faire hall and thi toures,  
 Thi semely zates & thi faire walles,  
 And alle thi crafftly corven balles!  
 Fair Ilyon that stondes so hye,  
 So lowe as thow schalt sone lye!  
 Suche a Cite was neuere non wrouzt,  
 Al schal sone turne to nouzt. (9878-9894)

The battle in which 1,000 Myrmidons are slain is described as the greatest ever fought:

In erthe was neuere suche a semble:  
 And that may alle men here & se  
 That romaunce may vndirstonde & rede,  
 Other therto wol take hede.  
 In alle the bokes that men haue sene  
 Off douzti men that haue bene,  
 When thei are thorow soght,  
 Sicurly ne fynde men noght  
 That suche a fyght In erthe befel,  
 ...

Ne that so many men to dethe wente  
 As did ther, or the batayle ente;--  
 Ne neuere of sege that so longe lay,  
 Ne neuere schal to domysday;--  
 Ne men that myght so longe endure  
 To fight euery day In her Armure  
 With-oute reste and with-oute sese,  
 That thei toke neuere trewe ne pese.

...  
 For now lyues nother man ne knyzt  
 That if thei were put to that fyzt,  
 That thei ne scholde be for-done,  
 Long tyme or it were none. (13687-13718)

This motif occurs again and again in the narrator's speech. He is telling the story not only of the fall of Troy, but also of the fall of a golden age. The world is passing from a state of relative virtue at the time of creation to increasing degeneracy. The poem depicts the fall of the good, leaving only the traitors, the weak, and the vengeful to inhabit the world. War, because it encourages revenge, which in time dominates nearly all aspects of man's behavior, is a significant cause of the world's movement away from goodness.

The revenge tragedies do not appear, at first, to be quite so pessimistic about the future. Fortinbras will regain his father's kingdom; Capulets and Montagues promise to live in harmony; Lucius, Titus' son, wants to restore order to the kingdom; and the ghost of Andrea promises to add sweet pleasures to Hieronimo's afterlife. The protagonists in the plays seem to be agents of divine vengeance, establishing a hope for the future by righting injustice; but in the process of revenge they themselves become tainted and must die. Thus, the continuation of

justice is not assured even when the protagonists triumph. Fortinbras is described by Horatio as "of unimproved mettle hot and full" (I, i, 96), and his actions show that he is not primarily a peace-loving man. Despite the harmony at the end of Romeo and Juliet, the Prince has lost a "brace of kinsmen" (V, iii, 294-295) and the peace described is a "glooming" one (V, iii, 305). In Titus Andronicus Lucius' first two acts as king are to order Tamora's body thrown to the vultures and Aaron buried to his waist and left to starve. In the Spanish Tragedy only the King of Spain and the Viceroy of Portugal are left, and both these characters have shown their inability to administer justice properly. There are no successors to the throne, and justice is established only in the next world by Revenge himself. The prospects for the future are not extremely bright in the plays; consequently, the plays, like the poem, show that revenge adversely affects the future because it ends in the death of those who had the most promise.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Dorothy Everett, "A Characterization of the English Medieval Romances," E&S, XV (1929), 113.

<sup>2</sup>Ojars Kratins, "The Middle English Amis and Amiloun: Chivalric Romance or Secular Hagiography?" PMLA, LXXXI (1966), 354.

<sup>3</sup>Dorothy Kempe, "A Middle English Tale of Troy," Englische Studien, XXIX (1901), 1-26.

<sup>4</sup>Harold Skulsky, "Revenge, Honor, and Conscience in Hamlet," PMLA, LXXXV (1970), 78.

<sup>5</sup>N.D. Hinton, "A Study of the Middle English Poems Relating to the Destruction of Troy," Diss. Univ. of Wisconsin, 1957, p. 217.

## V. DESCRIPTIVE TECHNIQUES

Composed during the 100 Years' War, the Laud contains an anti-war sentiment which, if it does not apply to all wars, at least condemns the war of vengeance by failing to idealize the violence and its effects. The Laud poet is not unique in revealing these sentiments; they may be found in other medieval works as well.<sup>1</sup> G.M. Trevelyan indicates that the Lollard creed objected to all war as unchristian and that this belief was probably fostered by "the devastating campaigns in France, crowned, when peace seemed in sight, by the Papal Crusades."<sup>2</sup> Bede Jarrett presents a historical summary of major theological positions on war which indicate that anti-war sentiment had both a theological position and an active following as early as the thirteenth century.<sup>3</sup> In The Regement of Princes (518) Hoccleve decries the war of vengeance,<sup>4</sup> as does Gower in Confessio Amantis (Pro. 12, 34),<sup>5</sup> and William Matthews finds an anti-war sentiment in the alliterative Morte Arthure which he links to vengeance in the poem.<sup>6</sup> The Laud poet, then, concerns himself with a topic meaningful to his contemporaries. Through contrasts, similes, humor, and descriptions of brutality, the poet creates a realistic picture of the detrimental aspects of war. As Margaret

Gist points out, such realism is not new to the later fourteenth century;<sup>7</sup> it is, rather, the conjunction of the realistic mode with the theme of vengeance that makes the Laud a forerunner of the Renaissance revenge tragedy.

One of the most noticeable characteristics of the Laud is its focus on the brutality of war. The poet often indulges in detailed gory descriptions of the slaughter. Some of these passages occur in general descriptions of the battles:

Some were smeten thorow the eye,  
Some to the brayn vn-to the cawe,  
Some In-to the body, and some In-to the mawe,  
Some the schuldres, & som the mylte,  
Off bothe the parties were many on spilte.

...  
Many a legge lay on that sond,  
Many loste bothe arme & hond,  
Many an hed was smeten of thore;  
Thei cried and zelled as boles rore,  
Men myght here the cry a myle  
Off hem that dyed ther that while. (6694-6705)

Thei cutte In-two bothe lyuer & mawes,  
Hand & hede, lunge & mylte;  
Many a gode man was ther spilte. (9812-9814)

Many an hed was al to-squat,  
And many ded on his hors sat;  
Some loste nose, & some her tonges,  
Som her lyuer, & som her longes. (15155-15158)

Other passages occur in descriptions of specific killings:

That duk was clouen In two parties,  
On eyther halff his hors he lyes;  
Hit was ruthe se how he honged,  
A-boute the sadel the hors him flonged,  
Til he him ouer his sadel cast  
Vndir hors feet at the last. (10831-10836)

Polidomas ful wroth vp-sterete,  
He pulled him [Cilydis] by the skirthe,  
He sette a strok vnder his choke,



That he myght neuere afftir loke;  
 For men myght se his tethe al white.  
 He lay ther ded as a kyte. (5269-5274)

These are only a few of the many passages in the Laud that depict sensational mutilation and death. Such horrors are related to the memento mori tradition, popular in the Renaissance, but originating in the middle ages. Willard Farnham presents two expressions of the contemptus mundi theme as the forerunners of Elizabethan tragedy: one is the medieval tragical narrative related to the de casibus theme and the other is the memento mori tradition, the artistic representation of death "in all the gross horrors which the imagination could contrive."<sup>8</sup> Descriptions of the war in the Laud, like the mutilation and death in the revenge tragedies, are expressions of such horrors. When the battles in the Laud are compared to those in the Gest, it is evident that the former poet composed his tale with a concern for depicting the crudity of killing. If, as Willard Farnham believes, horrors like these are an expression of the contemptus mundi theme, then the Laud poet sees war as a particularly earthly phenomenon, worthy of contempt rather than glorification.

This idea is also demonstrated by the fact that some of the preceding passages from the Laud contain a quasi-humorous tone which grows out of the conjunction of the gruesome content with the short couplets, the incongruous diction, and the occasional internal rhyme. In the following passages the humor is unmistakable:

He zaff the kyng Episcropus  
 Suche a recumbentibus,  
 He smot In-two bothe helme & mayle. (7491-7493)

He zaff him suche a benedicite,  
 That he fel dede opou the ble. (6793-6794)

He smot him so opou the snoute,  
 That bothe his eyen wenten oute. (5751-5752)

Ayther zaff other suche a kayl,  
 That thei fflowen ouer the hors tayl. (6785-6786)

By making violence in war the subject of humor, the poem shows that war is not a never ending series of heroic encounters wherein the loser is carried off to his lady love to be nursed to health or to die gloriously, as sometimes happens in other romances of the period. Similarly, there are no individual decisive combats in the Laud which can be idealized through descriptions of the hero dressing, offering prayers before the encounter, and saluting his lady. Despite the fact that the poem contains many elements of the chivalric tradition,<sup>9</sup> it fails to idealize that tradition. Thus, the tone of these passages concerning the violence of war is more suitable to a realistic representation of war than to an idealistic one.<sup>10</sup>

The Laud also contains numerous similes, a characteristic of style pointed out by both Kerpe and Wülfing.<sup>11</sup> Like the repulsive descriptions of slaughter, these similes, by referring to familiar objects, places, and events, create a realistic atmosphere. Achilles describes the Greek position: "We take here not but woundes /And ligge In dikes as dede houndes" (12289-12290). The number of

men slain by Hector is rendered imaginable through a reference to market day: "Thei dyed thikkere then men dryues gece /To chepyng-toun for to selle" (7428-7429). Severed heads rolling about the battlefield are actualized in terms of football: "Hedes reled aboute ouer-al, /As men playe at the fote-bal" (12671-12672). The breath of the dying is bodied forth as smoke and mist:

Men myght here the cry a myle  
Off hem that dyed ther that while.  
The brethe thei blew stode lyke a smoke,  
Hit rose over hem as the roke,  
Hit ferd a-boute hem as a myst. (6705-6709)

Hector slays so many Greeks that the blood from their wounds stands about him "As wynter water doth in forow" (5284). The comparisons are all in terms of earthly and unattractive phenomena. Men are compared to dead hounds, geese, and footballs. The blood of the dying is comparable to chilly winter water, and their breath hangs like a shroud over the battlefield. Such descriptions create little admiration for war.

In contrast to these passages are the many descriptions of fine clothing worn during truces. Diomedes and Ulixes are richly apparelled for their missions to the Trojan camp (8039-8064), and even the common people must put away their beautiful robes when the truce is over (8237-8249). In peace men richly ornament their bodies, but in war living bodies are a mutable and nearly valueless commodity.

The blood and gore of the battlefield also contrasts

to the numerous descriptions of the armies before they meet. For example, Hector sees the approaching Greek army:

Many an ost saw he comyng,  
 Rydande faste whil thei may fflyng,  
 With baneres brode and gold-be-gon;  
 The sonne on hem wel faire schon.  
 And many an armes was ther reuersed;  
 Iff on bare sable hit was diuersed:  
 He bar of gold and of goules,  
 He bar bestes and he bare foules,  
 He bare apes and he bar cheuronne,  
 And he of siluer with a cloue chestone,  
 He bare a bend and he an horne,  
 He bare his corneres gerone,  
 He beres grene and he asure,  
 Engreled with a fair bordure,  
 He beres an egle and he merelettis,  
 And he a daunce and he pelettis,  
 And he hath rose & he has molettis,  
 And he hermyne and he croselettis.  
 And thus haue thei her armes schiffted,  
 Ther baneres are wel hye lyffted;  
 Euery a lord his baneroure  
 Biddis him go be-fore the stoure. (8697-8718)

This description implies Hector's professional interest in heraldry and is done in the courtly or high style, a mode worthy of Hector's position as a great knight. More important, however, is the atmosphere of grandeur that the passage communicates. It is this magnificent setting that degenerates into a field of severed knuckles, livers, shoulders, and heads. The army as a whole radiates splendor, but the violent individual encounters described immediately afterward are repulsive.

Descriptions of the brutality on the battlefield are also quite opposite to the more attractive descriptions of the Hall of Ilion (9429-9568) and Hector's tomb (11149-

11292). These latter passages focus on beauty, opulence, and stability, while the battlefield scenes have only brutal, transitory qualities. Since other works of the fourteenth century contain comparable passages, the Laud poet was apparently working with standard descriptive techniques which would enhance one situation and disparage another. Had the poet chosen to idealize war, there would be little disparity between the battles and the periods of truce. But since the combatants do not fight with bright swords and duel heroically, a polarity is created between the truces, which usually describe idealistic phenomena, and the passages on war, which focus solely on brutality and destruction. The contrast between these two descriptive styles shows once again that the poem disparages war.

The Laud poet combines detailed accounts of death with an attitude of humor, compares the situations of war to familiar, though often disgusting or unattractive, objects, and contrasts the activities of war with the more desirable periods of peace. In addition, he concentrates on massive battles rather than individual combats, on motivation through vengeance rather than honor, and on the destruction of the war, rather than the glorious success of one man. This means that the poet's representation of war is more realistic than that in many of the earlier romances. Consequently, the poem demonstrates a turning away from the idealistic representation of war

in favor of a more realistic one. This tendency is typical of other works in the late fourteenth century and so is not unique in the Laud. But the union of revenge and realism is important because it looks forward to the same union of matter and mode in the Renaissance revenge tragedies.

Like the Laud, the revenge tragedies show the brutality vengeance can cause. In Titus Andronicus Lucius reports the murder of Alarbus, son of Tamora:

See, lord and Father, how we have performed  
Our Roman rites. Alarbus' limbs are lopped,  
And entrails feed the sacrificing fire,  
Whose smoke, like incense, doth perfume the sky.  
(I, i, 142-145)

In the same play, Lavinia's mutilation is described by Marcus, her uncle:

...Why dost not speak to me?  
Alas, a crimson river of warm blood,  
Like to a bubbling fountain stirred with wind,  
Doth rise and fall between thy rosèd lips  
Coming and going with thy honey breath.  
(II, iv, 21-25)

Although these two passages demonstrate a technical skill better than most of the descriptions of death and mutilation in the Laud, the focus on the violence of revenge is the same.

The plays do not comment on the war of vengeance, but they do disparage individual acts of revenge by showing in realistic fashion its brutal effects. In the Laud, however, the anti-war sentiment is an important element of the poem, and in trying to establish such an attitude the poet turns to descriptive techniques that portray the war

realistically. As a result, the theme is fused with descriptions of war that are more realistic than those of earlier poems like the alliterative Morte Arthure, which also deals with the war of vengeance. Consequently, the Laud stands as a kind of transition piece, demonstrating a movement toward a realistic representation of revenge.



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>William Matthews in his chapter "Arms and the Man," The Tragedy of Arthur (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1960), discusses both the religious and political doctrines on war in the middle ages.

<sup>2</sup>G.M. Trevelyan, England in the Age of Wycliffe (New York, 1909), pp. 272-273.

<sup>3</sup>Bede Jarrett, Social Theories of the Middle Ages 1200-1500 (Westminster, Maryland, 1942), pp. 181-212.

<sup>4</sup>Thomas Hoccleve, "III. The Regement of Princes," Hoccleve's Works, ed. by Frederick J. Furnivall, Early English Text Society, extra series 72 (London, 1897).

<sup>5</sup>John Gower, "Confessio Amantis," The Complete Works of John Gower, ed. by George C. Macaulay (Oxford, 1899-1902).

<sup>6</sup>Matthews, p. 27.

<sup>7</sup>Margaret Gist, Love and War in the Middle English Romances (Philadelphia, 1947), p. 134.

<sup>8</sup>Willard Farnham, The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1936), p. 41.

<sup>9</sup>D.N. Hinton, "A Study of the Middle English Poems Relating to the Destruction of Troy," Diss. Univ. of Wisconsin, 1957, p. 185.

<sup>10</sup>Charles Muscatine in Chaucer and the French Tradition (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1957) distinguishes between realistic and idealistic descriptive modes. The following chapter is based on this distinction.

<sup>11</sup>Dorothy Kempe, "A Middle English Tale of Troy," Englische Studien, XXIX (1901), 25, and J. Ernst Wülfing, "Das Bild und de Bildliche Verneinung Im Laud Troy-Book," Anglia, new series, XV (1904), 555-580 and XVI (1905), 29-80.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

The preceding analysis has investigated the major characteristics of the Laud and then related them to elements of the revenge tragedies. But there are aspects of the tragedies which this study does not touch on. Some of them, like the figures of the ghost, the female confidante, and the faithful servant, are not present in the Laud. Naturally, as we would not expect the poem to contain one-to-one relationships with the plays, those aspects of the revenge plays which are not present in the Laud will not be discussed. But important aspects which are included in the Laud only as minor elements should not be overlooked. This chapter is devoted to brief discussions of individualism, intrigue, the Machiavellian villain, and the ambivalent appeal of the protagonist who is also the avenger. Concluding remarks on the overall study are contained in the final paragraphs.

The most often cited characteristic of the Renaissance is, of course, an interest in individualism. While the Laud shows that individual actions caused the fall of Troy, it fails to develop detailed characterizations of the answerable individuals. Consequently, no characters in the Laud are as memorable as Hamlet or Hieronimo. Yet the

poem does recognize the individual as a significant cause in history. For example, while Modred, traitor to the Arthurian society, is sorry that he is fated to kill Gawain, Aeneas, one of two individuals responsible for the fall of Troy, makes no apologies. Likewise, the poet never excuses him by invoking Providential or astronomical causes for his action. On the other hand, the Arthurian society is flawed, and Modred is only the luckless agent chosen to bring about a demise that was fated to occur. The poet of the alliterative Morte Arthure clearly shows Modred as a victim of fate who begs Arthur not to leave him in charge of the kingdom and who is sincerely sorry that he should have to be the one to kill Gawain. Without the recognition of the individual as a significant cause of historical action, the great Renaissance tragedies of individuals would not have been possible. The Laud stands midway between the two theories of history: it shows the fall of a city as the alliterative Morte Arthure shows the fall of a society, but it blames the fall on a series of individual actions which could have brought about different results, had the actors made different choices.

Two other important aspects of the Renaissance revenge tragedy are intrigue and the Machiavellian villain. Aaron in Titus Andronicus and Lorenzo in the Spanish Tragedy both develop intricate plots involving notes, gold,

lies, and death to work their own self-serving ends. Intrigue and villainy are present in the Laud in the characters of Antenor and Aeneas, who betray the city. There can be no doubt that the narrator sees the two characters as evil:

God 3eue hem his malesoun  
That the tresoun schope & wrought  
And that hit so aboute broght!  
That was Antenor & Eueas--  
God 3eue hem an euel gras!  
Come thei neuere In heuene riche,  
That thei wolde so her lord be-swyke  
And al that gentil nacioun!  
Schal be put In-to dampnacioun! (17061-17069)

He seldom mentions the characters without cursing them:

God 3eue him sorwe and neuere Ioye! (1880)  
  
But her tresoun thei wol slely hele,  
Thei wil not telle what thei thenke--  
The deuel hem mot In helle senke! (17288-17290)

Antenor and fals Eueas--  
Se thei neuere god In the fas! (17757-17758)

Antenor and Eueas--  
In helle thei wone with Sathanas! (18275-18276)

By Antenor and Eueas;  
In helle mot be her wonyng-plas! (18357-18358)

A series of passages in the Laud which are not contained in any other version of the story demonstrate the traitors' determination. These passages are primarily oaths or descriptions of oaths. For example, when Aeneas hears of the plot to kill him, his reaction is described:

Eneas thanne was wroth y-now:  
To alle his goddis he made a vow  
That he wolde on him be wreke,  
Iff that he myzt go or speke. (17481-17484)

He subsequently tells Antenor "how he wolde sle hem bothe

/So was he to hem wrothe" (17491-17492). Here is a foreshadowing of the personal revenge which Aeneas will accomplish during the night of slaughter when he leads Pirrus to Priam's castle.

Later, the two traitors swear revenge together:

...thei scholde fight to-geder there,  
 The toun to traye and tho ther-In,  
 And do sle hem & alle her kyn;  
 Thei schal not lette for leue ne lothe.  
 (17494-17497)

The last line here emphasizes the traitors' malevolence. Since they have met previously and agreed to betray Troy (17237-17244), this oath is superfluous. The repetition does, however, underscore the traitors' extreme determination for revenge.

The plan they develop is marked by intrigue. In Dares, Polimodas is secretly sent out to the Greeks to tell them of the plan to betray Troy and to obtain assurances (39-40). Benoît makes no mention of a contact with the Greeks before the peace talks (IV, 24396-24824), but Guido indicates that assurances were obtained, although he doesn't indicate how (222). The Laud poet, like Lydgate and the Gest poet, omits any contact between the traitors and the Greeks. Unlike the other two poets, though, the author of the Laud indicates the reason the traitors' must secure peace talks: otherwise, there is no possibility for contacting the enemy:

...In the toun so bold none was,  
 With-oute the zates that durst pas.  
 But sicurly ther myght men se

That it myzt not but tresoun be,  
 Openly & discouert,  
 And it was tresoun rízt apert.  
 But thei myght speke of a pees,  
 Thei myght not elles speke with Gregais.  
 (17273-17280)

In this situation, then, the ensuing councils are crucial episodes in the plan to betray the city. The Laud differs from other versions in that the traitors dominate the council. At the beginning of the first council Aeneas speaks sarcastically to Priam:

Fals Eueas scornfulli be-gan  
 Vn-to the kyng speke than,  
 He seyde: 'and thow wol consayle take,  
 I rede that thow oures not for-sake.  
 If the hit like, the ne thar non other;  
 Iff thow dost not, thow may take other.'  
 (17309-17314)

In contrast, Priam answers with "wordes meke" (17315).

The episode ends with a quarrel between Aeneas and the king:

Eueas thanne was wonder wrothe,  
 He ros vp & thenne gothe;  
 He was Angred with that sawe,  
 Off his kyng stode him none awe.  
 Wordes fele of gret outrage,--  
 Herande alle the baronage,--  
 Spake he thanne vn-to the kyng,  
 That were veleyns wordes & vn-sittyng.  
 He gos hamward vnto his halle  
 With-oute leue of hem alle,  
 He wolde no leue at hem nym.  
 But Antenor zede home with hym;  
 Thei are bothe hom to-gedur went,  
 By him that made bothe Twede & Trent!  
 (17427-17440)

The passage indicates that Priam is now almost powerless and that Antenor and Aeneas have made a public break with him.

The same attitude is apparent in the second council when Aeneas addresses Priam:

But Eueas In his wickednesse  
 Seide to him In gret felnesse:  
 'Wherto, sir kyng, makestow it so?  
 Wenes thow oure wille for-do  
 By thi Powere & thi maystrie?  
 Wil thow, nele thow--the pees schal be!'  
 (17555-17560)

By dominating the councils, then, the traitors are able to send Antenor to the Greeks under the guise of proposing peace. The subsequent false peace arrangements, the theft of the Palladium, and the trick of persuading Priam to take the horse of brass within the city walls are all parts of the intrigue.

Hecuba shows how heinous Aeneas' crime is when she meets him in the streets during the night of violence:

How myght thow, In thi fals herte fynde,  
 Fals traytour, to be so vnkynde  
 To do thi lord suche schenschip,  
 That hadde done alle thi worschip?  
 He zaff the his doghter to wyue  
 Be-ffore alle men that were on lyue,  
 He worschepid the & loued the ay,  
 In the was al his trust & ffay,  
 And thow hast made him sclayn & hise  
 For his godenesse & ifraunchise! (18317-18326)

Priam is betrayed by his own son-in-law. Friendship and familial ties are of no consequence to the traitors. They are ruthlessly determined to betray the city in order to save themselves, and they accomplish their ends through intrigue and deception. Unlike Modred, they are not the hapless agents of fate, but neither are they completely diabolical since they, like Gawain in his encounter with the Green Knight, hope to save their lives. Because they are not motivated solely by greed or the desire for power,



Antenor and Aeneas are not full-blown Renaissance villains, but neither are they victims of fate.

Complex characterization is achieved in the plays when the hero is also the schemer. Both Hamlet and Hieronimo seek revenge and yet both claim the sympathies of the audience, Hamlet perhaps because his plans fail and he finally accomplishes the revenge through his own spontaneous reaction to Claudius' scheme,<sup>1</sup> and Hieronimo because he is so thoroughly justified in destroying Lorenzo.<sup>2</sup> In the Laud, Hecuba may be considered the scheming heroine, but the narrator's comments dispel any notions that her act was good.

Aeneas, though he is presented in the poem as thoroughly evil, probably inspired ambivalent feelings in the medieval audience since they were certain to associate him not only with the betrayal of Troy, but with the subsequent founding of nearly all the countries in Western Europe. The opening lines of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight express this ambivalence:

Sipen þe sege & þe assant watz sesed at Troye,  
 þe borȝ brittened & brent to brondez & askez,  
 þe tulk þat þe trammes of treasoun þer wroȝt  
 Watz tried for his tricherie, þe trewest on erthe.  
 Hit watz Ennias þe athel & his highe kynde  
 þat sipen depreced prouinces, & patrounes bicomē  
 Welnize of al þe wele in þe west iles. (1-7)<sup>3</sup>

In his notes on this passage, the editor, Sir Israel Gollancz, indicates that the first four lines refer to the unnamed Antenor, that Aeneas was not the betrayer of

Troy, but rather the heroic defender who left only when there was no chance of saving the city. Theodore Silverstein argues that all seven lines refer to Aeneas; and by citing Servius' commentaries of Virgil, he proves that Aeneas had a dual character, being both founder of Rome and traitor to Troy.<sup>4</sup> Silverstein and Gollancz both overlook the character of Aeneas as it is presented in the native English traditions. In interpreting the Laud, however, it may be just as great an error to overlook the popular conceptions of Aeneas' character that no doubt affected the medieval readers. They could scarcely have failed to notice that the person presented by the narrator as a heinous villain, worthy to be damned, is also the hero of the Western world. Through Aeneas, then, the Laud poet hints at a complexity of appeal similar to that of Hamlet or Hieronimo, but fails to develop a detailed characterization.

In terms of individualism, intrigue, villainy, and a character who stimulates ambivalent feelings, the Laud stands in a positive, but undeveloped relationship to the revenge tragedies. This study as a whole indicates that there was a literary interest in the theme of revenge prior to the Renaissance and that a number of subordinate motifs like madness, treachery, insult, blood responsibility, and total social destruction complemented the theme at that time as well as in the Renaissance. Although the Laud

is not a play, the poet dramatizes his narrative by using motivation, conversation, soliloquy, and realistic description to make the tale vivid. He associates his poem with other tragedies, omits all of the didactic passages included in other versions of the tale, and shows that Troy fell through a series of individual actions. Here, then, are strong indications that the Renaissance revenge tragedy is, in some ways, a continuation of medieval interests and is not necessarily a new and bizarre theme imported from Italy.

R. W. Chambers' work On the Continuity of English Prose has been criticized for failing to point out the possible continental sources of English mysticism and for overzealously tracing some rather dubious areas of continuity.<sup>5</sup> This study, of course, may fall victim to similar criticisms. In addition, it may be seen as a study which denigrates the medieval period by showing that the Laud anticipates the Renaissance, as if all the literary products of the latter period were good and all those of the former, inferior. It should be noted, then, that the poem does not herald a coming Renaissance, particularly since it is not a first-rate work. Rather, it is one phase of a changing representation of revenge which ranges from chivalric romance in the alliterative Morte Arthure to drama in the Renaissance. As this study shows, the Laud has characteristics of both. This does not mean that the poem was a source of Renaissance drama or that it was

even an influence. Obviously, Italian sources are responsible for many aspects of the revenge tragedies, but native traditions, which this analysis of the Laud shows did exist, are also important factors. Because there are literary works which focus on revenge prior to the sixteenth century, the continental sources must be seen in part as amplifying and psychologizing a theme that was already of interest to medieval audiences. As in the case of the fifteenth century Italian Renaissance, the sources of certain phenomena of the English Renaissance stretch back into the preceding eras; but these sources are obscured in English literature by their inaccessibility and sometimes by their mediocrity. Although the Laud is not as great as the alliterative Morte Arthure or many of the revenge tragedies, it is an important link in the gradual development of the Renaissance representation of revenge.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Harold Skulsky, "Revenge, Honor, and Conscience in Hamlet," PMLA, LXXXV (1970), 87.

<sup>2</sup>Philip Edwards (ed.), The Spanish Tragedy (Cambridge, 1959), pp. lx-lxi.

<sup>3</sup>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, ed. by Sir Israel Gollancz, Early English Text Society, 210 (London, 1940).

<sup>4</sup>Theodore Silverstein, "Sir Gawain, Dear Brutus, and Britain's Fortunate Founding: A Study in Comedy and Convention," MP, LXII (1964-1965), 189-206.

<sup>5</sup>William Matthews (ed.), Medieval Secular Literature (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1965), p.3.

## APPENDICES

I. SUMMARY OF THE LAUD TROY BOOK BY LINE NUMBER.

- 1-104 Poet's introduction and statement of content.
- 105-378 Pelleus tricks Jason into seeking the Golden Fleece.
- 379-528 Jason sails to coast of Troy and encounters unfriendly reception by Lamedon.
- 529-1132 At Colkos, Jason falls in love with Medea, wins the Golden Fleece, and returns to Thessaly.
- 1133-1754 Hercules, prompted by Jason, who wants revenge for Lamedon's insult, sails with a force to Troy and destroys it.
- 1755-1896 Priam rebuilds Troy.
- 1897-2166 Priam decides on revenge and sends Antenor to ask for Hesione's return.
- 2167-2712 Antenor returns with news of his failure to secure Hesione and a report of insulting treatment at the hands of the Greeks. Priam holds a council with the lords of Troy, then with his own sons, and again with the lords. They decide to send Paris to raid Greece or to bring back a woman to exchange for Hesione.
- 2714-3067 Paris goes to Thitharie, steals Helen, and sacks the city. He returns to Troy, and after a



triumphal entry, is married to Helen.

3068-3242 The Greeks prepare for revenge.

3243-3296 New introduction. Here begins the destruction of Troy.

3297-3734 Greeks gather. Calchas and Achilles hear the oracle of Apollo. Greeks sail to Thenedon and sack it.

3735-3952 Greeks send emissaries to Priam to ask for Helen's return.

3953-4123 Achilles and Thelaphus conquer Sicily and Achilles returns with supplies for the Greeks.

4124-4706 The Greeks decide to attack Troy. They sail into the harbor, encounter the Trojans, and establish a camp.

4707-6008 1st Battle. Hector assembles his troops and takes leave of his father. Agamemnon assembles his troops. Hector kills Patroclus. Many encounters are related. Hector withdraws his men at the request of Ajax Thelamon, son of Hesione.

6009-6063 Greeks demand eight weeks' truce. Of the Greeks, Patroclus and Protheselaus are buried; of the Trojans, Cassibalne is buried.

6064-6362 2nd Battle. Achilles and Hector meet several times. The Greek army is put to flight. Night ends the battle. The poet cites his authorities, Dictys, Dares, and Guido.

- 6363-6492 The Greeks complain of Hector's strength. Agameunon calls a council in which it is decided that Achilles will kill Hector by trickery.
- 6493-7028 3rd Battle. Many encounters take place. The Greeks are put to flight and night ends the battle.
- 7029-7221 Priam holds a council to decide the fate of the prisoner Thoas, who killed Cassibalne.
- 7222-7322 A storm causes the Greeks to lament their fate.
- 7323-7916 4th Battle. Many are killed and maimed. Antenor is captured at the end of the battle. Polimodas weeps all night for his father's fate.
- 7917-8020 5th Battle. No specific encounters are recorded. Hector alone saves the Trojans from defeat. Night ends the battle, and there is great mourning.
- 8021-8208 The Greeks send messengers to Troy, who are able to secure a three months' truce despite Hector's objections.
- 8209-8617 Description of the truce. Hector visits Achilles. Both sides refuse to let the two men fight in individual combat.
- 8618-9326 6th Battle. The troops are aligned on both sides and the Greek banners are described. A fierce battle ensues and Hector is wounded. He refuses to leave the battle. Achilles is

wounded by Hector. Troilus and Diomedes meet. Achilles is wounded again by Hector, and night ends the battle.

- 9327-9404 7th Battle. It lasts thirty days, but no specific encounters are related. Six of Hector's brothers are slain, and Hector is badly wounded.
- 9405-9618 Priam demands a six months' truce. Hector recovers in the hall of Ilion, which is carefully described. Both sides bury their dead.
- 9619-9803 8th Battle. Winter is gone. A terrible battle ensues. The Greeks are driven back. No specific encounters are related. Night ends the battle. Priam and all the lords and ladies bless Hector.
- 9804-9828 9th Battle. It lasts twelve days. No encounters are reported.
- 9829-9992 The Greeks ask for thirty days' truce. The narrator laments that Priam ever granted the truce.
- 9993-10351 Andromache dreams Hector will die and attempts to stop him from going to battle.
- 10352-10972 10th Battle. Troilus encounters Diomedes. Achilles slays Margariton. Hector rushes to battle. Many individual encounters are recorded. Achilles kills Hector and in turn is wounded by Odemon. Both armies retire.

- 10973-11290 The Greeks rejoice. The Trojans mourn Hector's death. A tomb is prepared, and the body is preserved.
- 11291-11488 Physicians care for Achilles. Agamemnon calls a council to plan strategy. Greeks ask for and receive a two months' truce.
- 11489-11678 A new Greek council is called. Palamydes challenges Agamemnon and finally is given Greek leadership.
- 11679-11898 11th Battle. Priam leads the Trojans. Many encounters are reported. The Greeks unsuccessfully attempt to cut the Trojans off from the city.
- 11899-12254 Priam secures a truce to bury Hector's body. Achilles sees Pollexena in the temple, falls in love with her, and arranges with Hecuba to marry her.
- 12255-12452 Achilles calls a Greek council and unsuccessfully tries to persuade them to return home. Famine strikes the Greek camp, but supplies are secured.
- 12453-12828 12th Battle. Many individual encounters are reported. Dephebus, mortally wounded by Palamydes, urges Paris to kill the Greek leader. The Greek ships are burned. Heber and a servant beg Achilles to join the battle. Achilles is distraught. Night ends the battle.

- 12829-12886 Dephebus dies. Greeks mourn Palamydes and elect Agamemnon again.
- 12887-12962 13th Battle. Troilus slays many, but rain ends the battle.
- 12963-13024 14th Battle. No individual encounters reported. Fighting lasts seven days, and the Greeks ask for a two months' truce.
- 13025-13316 Agamemnon sends messengers to Achilles to persuade him to return to battle. The Greeks hold a council to decide their course of action. Calchas persuades them to stay.
- 13317-13368 15th Battle. Troilus revenges Hector's death by killing many. Night ends the battle.
- 13369-13512 16th Battle. Greeks prepare to revenge themselves. Troilus beats Diomedes in combat, but is ultimately wounded by Thelamaneus. Menelaus and Agamemnon are severely wounded.
- 13513-13618 The Greeks ask for and receive a six months' truce. Brixaida visits Diomedes. The truce entertainments are narrated. Achilles promises to send the Myrmidons to battle.
- 13619-13678 17th Battle. Achilles sends his men to battle. No specific encounters are reported. Night ends the battle.
- 13679-13846 18th Battle. Many encounters are reported. Troilus is captured by the Myrmidons, but rescued by Paris.

- 13919-13980 19th Battle. It lasts seven days. The Greeks ask for a long truce. The Trojans grant only time to bury the dead.
- 13981-14288 20th Battle. Many specific encounters are related. The Trojans overrun the Greek camp. After learning the fugitives' tale, Achilles rushes to battle, encounters Troilus, and is wounded. Night ends the battle.
- 14289-14360 Troilus reports Gryme Gwynel's death and Achilles' return to battle. Priam blames Hecuba for encouraging Pollexena's match with Achilles.
- 14361-14568 21st Battle. It lasts seven days. Agamemnon asks for a six months' truce.
- 14569-14644 Achilles is nursed to health and swears revenge on Troilus.
- 14645-14998 22nd Battle. Achilles instructs his soldiers to surround Troilus, which they do, and Achilles slays him and drags the corpse around the battlefield. Menon insults Achilles to give the Trojans time to recover the body. Night ends the battle.
- 14999-15050 The Trojans mourn for Troilus, while the Greeks rejoice.
- 15051-15230 23rd Battle. On the seventh day of this battle, Achilles is well enough to fight. He slays Menon. The Trojans flee. There is

general mourning in Troy.

- 15231-15653 Priam asks for a truce. A tomb for Troilus is built. Hecuba with Paris plans revenge on Achilles, and Paris slays him in the temple. The Greeks hold a council, deciding ultimately to continue the siege. Ajax suggests the Greeks send for Pirrus.
- 15654-15946 24th Battle. Many specific encounters are related. Paris and Ajax kill each other. The Trojans flee. Paris' body is brought to Helen and then buried. Trojans remain within the city walls.
- 15947-16064 Penthesilea arrives. Her background is narrated.
- 16065-16323 25th Battle. Penthesilea leads the Trojans. Many specific encounters are related, but she is heroine of the day. Night ends the battle.
- 16324-16406 Priam honors Penthesilea.
- 16407-16452 26th Battle. An extended battle ensues until finally both sides agree to stop and bury the dead.
- 16453-16616 The Greeks send Menelaus for Pirrus. He comes to the camp, assuming the duty for avenging his father's death.
- 16617-16988 27th Battle. After several specific encounters, Penthesilea and Pirrus meet. Pirrus is bested.
- 16989-17039 28th Battle. It lasts four weeks. Ten thousand knights are slain.



- 17040-17070 During this truce before the last battle, the narrator foretells disaster.
- 17071-17228 29th Battle. Penthesilea wounds Pirrus, but is ultimately killed by him. The Trojans flee. The Greeks surround the city. Penthesilea's body is thrown into a lake.
- 17229-17442 The traitors--Anchises, Aeneas, Antenor, Polydomas--plot the overthrow of Troy. They go to Priam with their false plan for peace.
- 17443-17508 Priam and Amphi-mac-us plot to murder the traitors. Aeneas hears of the plot and successfully stops it.
- 17509-17584 The Trojan council decides to sue for peace. Antenor is lowered from the wall.
- 17585-17680 Antenor negotiates with the Greeks his plan to betray the city.
- 17681-17756 Priam holds a council to hear of Antenor's arrangements with the Greeks. Antenor falsely tells the council that the Greeks are willing to make peace.
- 17757-17898 Antenor and Aeneas go to the Greeks and bring back Ulixes and Diomedes to announce the terms of the peace. A terrible noise is heard. Antenor tells the Greeks Troy can't be taken until the Palladium is removed. He has plans for its removal.
- 17899-18022 Antenor tells the council the terms of the

false peace, and subsequently bribes a priest. There are foreboding signs on the altar when sacrifice is made. The Greeks make a horse of brass, and the allies of the Trojans depart.

18023-18134 The Palladium is stolen. Greeks and Trojans swear to maintain a peace. The horse of brass is offered as a gift to the goddess Pallas, whose image the Greeks have stolen.

18135-18386 Greeks sail out of the harbor. Sinon and his knights climb out of the horse at night and signal the Greek fleet. Troy is sacked and burned.

18387-18649 The Greeks convene to divide the spoils. Pirrus sacrifices Pollexena, and Hecuba is stoned to death.

18650-18664 The Poet asks for a blessing.

## II. THE TWO STORIES OF TROY.

### Homeric Tradition

Cause of the war--Paris gives Aphrodite  
the golden apple.

Oenone pleads with Paris not to go.  
Odysseus and Achilles try to avoid  
going to war.

Sacrifice of Iphigenia.  
Prothesilaus is the first Greek to  
set foot on Trojan soil and so is  
killed to fulfill the gods'  
prophecy.

### Dictys-Dares Tradition

Cause of the war--Lamedon insults Jason's  
party when they land at Troy. Paris'  
judgment appears in the council scene  
when Priam tries to persuade the  
Trojans to bring Hesione back. It is  
recited as a dream.

Oenone does not appear.  
These episodes do not occur.

This episode does not occur.  
This episode does not occur.

## II. continued

### Homeric Tradition

Calchas is a Greek priest.

Achilles refuses to fight because

Agamemnon takes Briseis.

Achilles returns to battle when Hector kills Patroclus, who was wearing the Greek hero's arms to frighten the Trojans.

Paris and Menelaus meet in single combat to see who gets Helen. Paris is carried to Helen's chamber by Aphrodite.

### Dictys-Dares Tradition

Calchas is a Trojan priest who defects after he hears the prophecy of Apollo.

Achilles refuses to fight because he has promised Hecuba that he will raise the siege if she will give him Pollexena in marriage.

Achilles returns to battle because the Trojans are overrunning the Greek camp. Patroclus is killed in the first formal battle. His early death motivates the enmity between Achilles and Hector.

Paris and Menelaus meet in battle, but never fight in single combat. Paris is protected by Hector, but never carried off the battlefield.

## II. continued

Homeric Tradition

Hecuba appeals to Athena to stop the war.

Andromache pleads with Hector not to return to battle.

Hector goes to battle because he does not want to be a coward and because he feels he should lead his men.

Hector flees Achilles until Deiphobus appears. Achilles kills Hector because Athena gives him miraculous help.

Achilles drags Hector's corpse about the walls.

Dictys-Dares Tradition

This episode does not occur.

Andromache has a dream, attempts to stop Hector from going to battle by appealing to Priam.

Hector does not go to battle until Margariton is killed.

Achilles waits until Hector is unarmed; then attacks and kills him.

Achilles is so severely wounded that he must be carried off the battlefield. Achilles later drags Troilus' corpse

## II. continued

### Homeric Tradition

Priam begs for Hector's body.

Hector's body is burned.

Paris shoots Achilles in the heel in battle.

Odysseus and Ajax fight over Achilles' arms. Ajax commits suicide.

Odysseus and Diomedes steal the Palladium.

Paris is killed by Hercules' bow and arrow, shot by Philoctetes.

Sinon lies to the Trojans and gets them to take the wooden horse

### Dictys-Dares Tradition

around the battlefield.

Hector's body is brought back to Troy by Paris and the other Trojans.

Hector's body is sanctified.

Paris and his men, at Hecuba's instigation, murder Achilles in the temple.

Achilles' arms and all his goods belong to Pirrus.

Antenor bribes a priest, secures the Palladium, and gives it to the Greeks. Paris is killed by Ajax in a fair fight.

The brass horse is part of the peace negotiations. The Greeks want to

## II. continued

Homeric Tradition

inside the walls.

Lacoon, seized by Poseidon's sea  
serpents, dies with his sons.

Aeneas heroically tries to save Troy,  
even after the Greeks have cap-  
tured nearly all of it.

Hecuba is killed at the household  
altar.

Polites, Priam's last son, is slain  
by Pyrrhus before the old man's eyes.

Dictys-Dares Tradition

appease Pallas Athena for stealing  
her image; Antenor and Aeneas urge  
the Trojans to accept the horse.

Sinon is leader of the troops inside  
the horse.

The episode does not occur.

Aeneas betrays Troy and leads Pirrus to  
the palace so that the latter can  
kill Priam.

Hecuba flees with Pollexena and is  
finally stoned to death after she  
goes mad at seeing Pollexena sacri-  
ficed on Achilles' grave.

The episode does not occur.



## II. continued

Homeric TraditionDictys-Dares Tradition

Hector's son is thrown from the city  
walls.

The episode does not occur.

### III. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Wood, Gordon R. "The Middle English Alliterative Destruction of Troy: A Critical Study," Diss. Princeton, 1952. A comparison of the Gest, Lydgate's Troy Book, and the Laud in terms of their differences as translations of Guido. Assumption that the Laud is a translation obscures many differences between it and the other two works.

Wülfing, J. Ernst. "Das Bild und de Bildliche Verneinung Im Laud Troy-Book," Anglia, new series, XV (1904), 555-580 and XVI (1905), 29-80. Thorough listing of the similes and metaphors in the poem. No interpretation of their relationship to the total work.

———. "Das Laud Troy-Book," Englische Studien, XXIX (1901), 374-396. A good introductory study evaluating Dorothy Kempe's article and commenting on the state of the MS, the dialect, and the source. Hypothesizes that the poet used a French version of the Troy legend and that he knew Guido, Benoît, and Statius. Indicates the dialect is northeast Midlands.

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Text Society, 121, 122. London, 1902-1903. The only text of the poem available. Lacking introduction, notes, and glossary. Transcription is generally good. Punctuation, especially quotation marks, is misleading.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

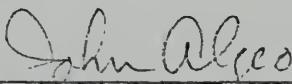
Sharon Lynn Stevenson was born August 28, 1941, at Malvern, Iowa. In June, 1959, she was graduated from Glenwood High School. In June, 1963, she received the degree of Bachelor of Arts with a major in English and Speech from Tarkio College. In August, 1965, she received the degree of Master of Arts with a major in English from the University of West Virginia. From 1965 to 1967 she worked in the Putnam County School system at the junior high and junior college levels. In 1967 she enrolled in the Graduate School of the University of Florida. She worked as a teaching assistant in the Department of Comprehensive English from September, 1967, to April, 1970. From April, 1970, to August, 1970, she held an NDEA fellowship. From August, 1970, to the present time she has pursued her work toward the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Richard A. Dwyer, Chairman  
Associate Professor of English


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John T. Algeo  
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Dean of the Graduate School

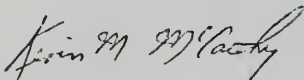
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This dissertation was submitted to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate Council, and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

August, 1971



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